

THE ALL-FOOTBALL STORY PAPER.

The "Boys' Realm"

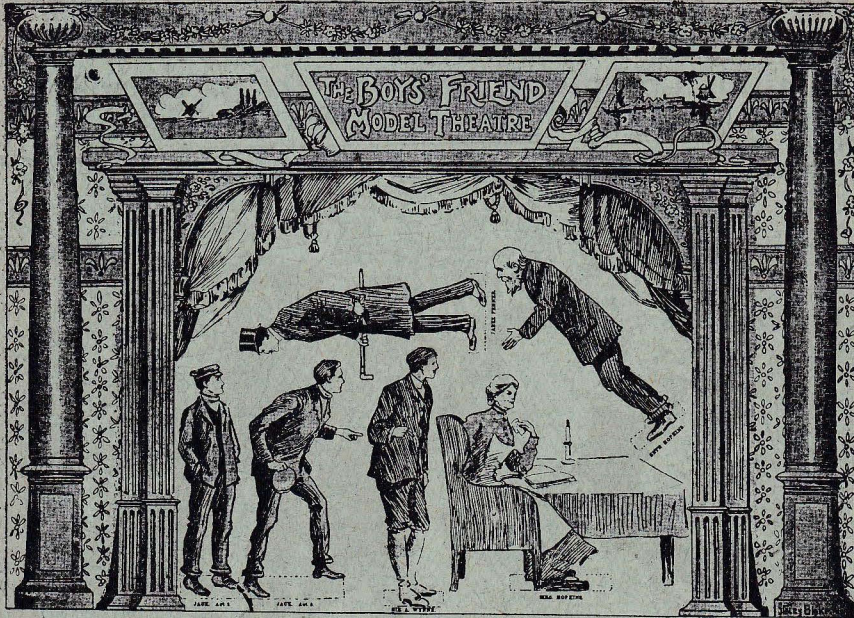
GRAND XMAS.  
**1D**  
**2**  
NUMBER

# FOOTBALL LIBRARY



**"THE SNOW MATCH"**

A TALE OF PELHAM SCHOOL



**COMPLETE  
MODEL  
THEATRE**

COMPRISING :

Coloured  
Stage Front  
and  
Characters,  
Bright New  
Play,  
Back Scenes,  
Wings, and  
Full Directions,  
Given Away  
With Every Copy  
of  
THE  
BOYS' FRIEND  
Christmas  
Number,  
Now on Sale, 2d.

**"PETER JACKSON,**  
**OF MANCHESTER."**

*Great New Boxing Story.*

NOW STARTING IN

**"THE BOYS' REALM."**

**1d. Every Saturday.**

FOOTBALL LIBRARY.—No. 14.

**1d. Every Saturday.**

# THE SNOW MATCH.

Another Splendid, Complete Tale of Pelham School.



Jack Noble jumped high, and with a twist of his head drove the ball hard down at Goodwin. To the amusement of the spectators it caught the goalie fairly on the nose.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Fags' Snow Battle—Clifford & Co. Take a Hand—Monsieur Gerard Has An Unpleasant Surprise.

**H**A, ha, ha!" roared Marker and Bayne, of the Shell. "Noble caught Russell a stunner that time!"

"He, he!" grinned Prince. "Come here, Cluffy, and squint at the kids. Russell's still digging the snow out of his ears."

"I wonder you can look at the little rotters," sneered the captain of the Junior Football Eleven at Pelham. "They're in their element, groping about in the mud and slinging it at one another."

"It isn't mud; it's snow," corrected Marker.

"Same thing," sniffed Clifford, moving to the window where stood his chums looking down into the quad.

It was "breaking-up week" at Pelham. Christmas was but a few days distant now, and an air of excitement pervaded the whole school. After two more days the Pelhamites would flock to their homes for the holidays, and the great school would be silent and deserted.

The boys in the lower Forms were in great glee. For almost a week there had been snow on the ground, and now a sharp frost had set in that gave promise of skating.

Down in the quad there sounded the merry shouts of the fags as they snowballed one another to their hearts' content. Marker, Bayne, and Prince, as they stood in Clifford's study looking down at the ani-

mated scene, could not help laughing at the antics of their great rival, Jack Noble, the skipper of the Third Eleven, and his chums, though they considered it much too undignified for Fourth-Formers like themselves to go down and follow the fags' example.

"You know, chaps, we ought to get our own back on the little scugs before we break up for the vac.," suggested Clifford. "We want to spifflicate the little wasters, and wipe out all the scores they've had against us."

"It'll take a bit of doing," sniffed Prince.

"Come to think of it," said Bayne, "we've got something to wipe off against the Noble louts. We haven't scored much against 'em this term."

"I propose we call a truce till after the holidays," suggested Marker. "We'd better let the little worms alone. Besides, this is the time of year for peace and goodwill to all—"

"Good old gasbag!" sneered Clifford. "The peace-and-goodwill racket was worn out years ago. Nice lot of pals you are—I don't think—with your crazy suggestions! Noble's frightened all the pluck out of you. How can I bring off any japes against 'em when I've got such a half-hearted crew as you to back me up?"

"We never seem to get hold of any good japes like they do," said Prince. "Fact is, we always hit below the belt, and they don't. You can't deny it, Cluffy."

"Oh, go on, old jaw-me-dead! Pile on the agony!"

Clifford flung himself into an armchair and scowled at his companions.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Bayne from the window. "Come and have a squirt, Cluffy. Taffy Evans has just tripped up Macalpine. He's rolling him over and over in the snow. He, he! It'd make a cat laugh! There's about a dozen of 'em all in a heap now."

"I don't see why the kids should have all the fun to themselves," remarked Prince.

"Can't we snowball the little wasters down there?" said Bayne. "We could go on the roof, make a basketful of snowballs, bring 'em down, and pelt the young bounders from the window. They wouldn't be able to throw a single one back at us."

"That's a jolly good idea!" cried Prince enthusiastically. "Come on, Cluffy! What's the good of chewing the rag?"

Bayne seized a waste-paper basket, and Marker and the Junior captain followed him up the staircase to the roof.

A large part of the roof was flat and asphalted, and was sometimes used by the seniors as a roller-skating rink. It was easy of access to all the boys, however, for it was one of the means of escape mentioned in the fire regulations of the school.

Clifford declined to make any snowballs when the roof was reached, and looked on in sullen silence. In five minutes the basket was full, and Bayne and Prince found it was as much as they could carry comfortably.

On their way back they ran into the fat little figure of Monsieur Gerard, the French master, but they hurried by before he had time to catch a glimpse of the contents of the basket.

"Narrow squeak that!" puffed Bayne. "Old Froggie's been on the prowl all day."

"He's as rotten as his conjugations," said Prince. "Now then, for the grand bombardment, chaps. All missiles free! Walk up, gents! Every time yer hits a fag yer wins a fat cigar!"

He flung the window up to its widest extent. Valence, the secretary of the Third Eleven, was stooping down in the act of making a snowball. Bayne's missile struck him in the back of the neck, and the fag collapsed in the snow as flat as a pancake. The Fourth-Formers roared with delight, even Clifford setting up a guffaw.

Valence supposed Lawson minor to be the culprit, for he stalked up behind his Form chum and sent him sprawling headlong.

When Lawson minor got on his feet he chased Valence, caught him, and soon the pair of them were rolling over and over in the yielding, white, fleecy mantle which covered the ground.

An instant later Macalpine, familiarly known at Pelham as "Fighting Mac," got a snowball on the top of his head, and he looked up to the sky with a puzzled air.

"Hech, laddies, I dinna ken afore that it ever rained the snowba'," he drawled in broad Scotch. Then his sharp eyes caught sight of Clifford & Co. at the study window in the act of hurling snowballs down into the quad at the fags. "Eh, but it's a mean advantage to tak' o' us," cried Fighting Mac.

The Scots boy, who was as good a full-back as either of the Sixth-Formers in the First Eleven, said no more, for Bob Russell hurled a snowball that caught him full in the mouth, and made him splutter and cough as the icy fragments found their way down his throat.

FOOTBALL LIBRARY.—No. 14.

"Pax, kids!" he roared, when he had cleared his mouth. "Cease fire, all of you! Prepare to attack the enemy!"

"Rats!" responded Murphy, taking aim at Macalpine. "Sure, the spalpeen doesn't know what he's talking of at all, at all. How can we cease fire and attack at the same time, ye porridge-eater? Ow! Ow!" He broke off as a huge lump of hard snow struck him in the face.

Clifford had welded three average-size snowballs into one, and it had caught Murphy on the side of the jaw and knocked him over like a ninepin.

"Hi, hi, kids!" shouted Jack Noble, pointing his finger towards Clifford's study window. "Look at the rotters! That's where they're coming from. Chuck it, you looney, can't you?" He dodged a snowball Taffy Evans hurled at him. "That's where you want to throw 'em. Give Clifford and his wasters a turn."

Hostilities ceased at once as the fags recognised their old-time foes at the window on the second floor. Exclamations of surprise and disgust broke from the fags everywhere.

"Well, I'm sugared!" roared Taffy Evans, the Third Eleven's goalkeeper. "Come on, kids! Give 'em beans!"

The fags bent down and made snowballs as fast as their numbed hands would allow them. Soon they were hurling them up towards the Junior captain's study. But the window was a considerable height from the ground, and only a few snowballs reached anywhere near the attackers. Moreover, there was the danger of a hard snowball smashing one of the many windows that studded that wing of the school.

"Dry up, my sons!" roared Jack Noble, after a moment's thought. "We'd better take cover. We can't do anything against the sweeps. We'll only be breaking windows and getting the Head down on us. Let's wait our opportunity, and pay the wasters back another way."

"Begorra," cried Murphy, "and that's what we won't do! Ould Oireland for ever! Sure, we won't lay down our arms and give in to the spalpeens!"

The hot-headed son of Erin moulded a big snowball, and taking as precise aim as if he were bowling in a cricket match, sent the missile hurtling towards Clifford's window.

A shout went up from Bob Russell:

"Now you've done it, Murphy, old son!"

Every fag ceased snowball making, plunged his hands into the pockets of his overcoat, and tried to assume the air of one just strolling about to kill time.

Monsieur Gerard, the French master, occupied the room immediately below Clifford's study. Monsieur was a believer in fresh air, even in Arctic weather, and so his window was down at least a foot from the top.

Murphy's snowball had gone clean into the room!

The fags knew that Monsieur was there, for they had seen him standing at the window looking down at them only a few seconds before.

"I wouldn't like to be in your shoes, Murphy me lad," grinned Fighting Mac. "Froggie's just bought a new Panama cane, and he's itching to use it."

At that moment the French master flung up the window and put out his head. He was mopping his face with a towel, for the snowball had caught him

on the tip of the nose as he sat writing, facing the window.

"Who vas zat?" he screamed excitedly. "Ze scoundrel zat threw zat ball at me come to my room zis minute! I vill him make pay for ze insult he him offered me! I vill—"

It was one of the French master's unlucky days. As his head was well thrust out from the window a huge pile of snow, loosened from around the chimney-pot by the heat, suddenly slid down the roof, and chose that inopportune moment to fall on the master's head.

A suppressed howl came from the window, and then a huge roar of laughter went up from the fags. They could not restrain themselves. The scene was too funny!

From above, Clifford and his chums had witnessed the disaster, and they, too, were convulsed with mirth.

The pile of snow covered the Frenchman's head and neck, and entirely hid him from sight. Then, as they watched with grinning faces and hands held to their sides, they saw Monsieur Gerard shake his head like a retriever dog, slam down the window, and disappear.

"There'll be trouble for someone now," chuckled Jack Noble.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

**Clifford's Chimney Wheeze—Mr. Snark Gets Caught—Mr. Slaney on the Warpath—Jack Noble Makes a Pax Proposal.**

**C**LIFFORD burst into the study, where Bayne, Marker, and Prince were awaiting him with anxious faces. He had left them immediately after the snow had fallen on Monsieur Gerard's devoted head in answer to a peremptory summons from the angry French master.

"Come on, you chaps!" cried the Junior captain. "The little worms are in their study. I saw Noble and Russell go in as I came out of Froggie's room. Freeze on that sack, Bayne, and look slippy, all of you."

Bayne groped under the table and produced a coarsely-woven sack.

"What about Froggie?" asked Marker. "Hasn't he been tanning you?"

"No fear!" replied the Junior captain. "The old jossor actually accused me of slinging snow at him. But I soon proved to him that it had fallen from the roof."

"You might have made it hot for the Noble insects while you'd got the chance," suggested Prince, grinning.

"You bet I thought of it," returned Clifford, with a leer. "But it couldn't be done this time. Come on, chaps!"

Bayne tucked the sack out of sight under his waistcoat, and they followed Clifford to the roof. To their delight, they met no one on the way. Clifford climbed over some brickwork till he came to a row of chimney-pots. Bayne and the others followed him.

"Don't make a mistake with the pots," cautioned Marker. "There'd be the deuce to pay if we got smoking out the Head or one of the masters."

"Don't you worry your fat, Marker," retorted the Junior captain crossly. "I know what I'm doing right enough. Chuck over the sack, Bayne."

Clifford paused before the last chimney but one in the row, and began stuffing the sack into the pot. There

was a great deal of smoke coming out, and it got into the Junior captain's eyes and down his throat, making him cough and splutter.

"It don't look to me like the pot we tried the other day," suggested Prince. "I thought it was the last but one at the other end of the row. You ought to have marked it, Clifly."

"I did, you ass!" spluttered the Junior skipper, wiping the water out of his eyes. "But the blessed soot or the snow have hidden my pencil-marks."

At length Clifford got the sack stuffed into the pot to his satisfaction. It was tucked in so tightly that not a vestige of smoke could escape.

Clifford looked like a sweep by the time he had finished, and his cronies soon roared with their laughter.

"Dry up, you owls!" cried Clifford threateningly. "Now to see the fun below!" cried Bayne. "I wish we could do something to lock the young worms in their study till they got smoked like kippers."

"Let's give 'em a squint as we go down," suggested Marker.

They climbed through the door in the roof, and made their way downstairs. Bayne went on in advance as scout, whilst Clifford kept in the rear, ready to slip away at the approach of a master.

So they proceeded till the third floor was reached. Bayne had his eye glued to the keyhole of Jack Noble's study, when the door suddenly opened, and Noble and Russell almost fell on top of the Fourth-Former.

"Hallo, Bayne! Up to your old game!" cried the Third Eleven skipper. Then Jack Noble caught sight of Clifford in the rear, and as his rival captain dashed by, he stared in amazement. "Hallo, Clifly!" he shouted after him down the staircase. "Trying to do the sweep-out of a job?"

But the Junior captain did not stop to reply. He went straight to the Fourth Form lavatories, and began scrubbing his face and hands with soap and hot water.

"Our rotten luck as usual," groaned Clifford; "the blessed thing ain't working!"

"It ought to," said Bayne, who with Marker and Prince stood watching the ablutions of their chief. "You packed in the top of the pot as if you'd been used to the game all your life."

"Eh! What's that?" sniffed the Junior captain, uncertain whether Bayne was soft-soaping him or pulling his leg.

"Anyway, there wasn't a sign of smoke in Noble's study," added Marker.

"There's smoke somewhere," remarked Prince, sniffing vigorously. "I can smell it. It won't be any joke for us if Clifly's bunged up the Head's chimney."

He opened the door and peered out into the corridor. A cloud of brown smoke was rolling towards them. It was so thick that it looked as if a fog had settled down. The four cronies stared with worried faces at one another.

"You've done it now, you fathead!" snapped Bayne. "You've bunged up the wrong pot."

"By gum, so I have!" cried Clifford. "Come on, chaps! It won't take us a minute to slip up to the roof and pull the sack out again!"

In breathless haste they streaked along the corridor to the staircase. Their anxiety increased a hundredfold when they saw Mr. Slaney, the Third Form-master, who was reputed to possess the worst temper in the school, standing at the door of his

room, from which clouds of thick smoke were pouring.

That Mr. Slaney was in a towering rage was obvious at a glance. His face, too, was as black as a nigger minstrel's. He had just sent Noble and Russell in search of Snark, the school porter, and he was muttering furiously at the delay.

The Fourth-Formers, who slunk by with wildly-beating hearts, did not know this, of course. When they were out of sight of the angry master they flew up the remainder of the stairs at top speed.

"What rotten luck!" cried Clifford, when at last they had reached the roof. "I'd rather have bunged up the Head's chimney than that beast Slaney's. He hasn't a scrap of humour in him. He never can see a joke."

"It won't be much of a joke for us," grumbled Prince. "Your rotten japes always go wrong, Clifford, you ass!"

"Hurry up with the beastly thing," panted Bayne. "Don't go to sleep over it, Cluffy. I can hear someone coming."

"Come and pull it off yourself," snapped the Junior captain. "I'm doing all the work, and you chaps all the grumbling. My suit won't be fit to wear after this."

Clifford was certainly getting himself into a mess. The sack had collected a vast accumulation of soot from the pot, and as the Junior skipper tugged at it, it descended in showers all over him. With a last struggle he succeeded in removing the sack from the pot.

"Oh, Jemima, we're done for now!" muttered Bayne. "I told you there was someone coming."

"Quick! Jump over the brickwork!" cried Clifford. "If we keep doggo they won't spot us, and we can slip down afterwards."

They had scarcely hidden themselves, when Snark, the school porter, appeared on the roof. Snark counted all boys at Pelham as his enemies, though his especial worries were Jack Noble and Bob Russell.

Snark stepped gingerly over the flat, snow-covered roof, and glancing to left and right of him suspiciously, as if he expected an onslaught at any moment, he advanced to the first row of chimneys-pots.

As a matter of fact, it was only with the greatest difficulty that Noble and Russell could persuade the school porter that Mr. Slaney wanted to see him urgently, for Snark believed that he was being made the victim of another of the fags' practical jokes.

The Fourth-Formers peeped between the pots and watched the porter's antics. They were certainly mysterious. Snark advanced to each chimney in turn, and peered down it intently. What he expected to find it is difficult to say. Anyway, he drew blank every time.

By the time he had reached the end of the first row of pots Snark's appearance had undergone a change. His face and collar were covered with smuts. He was shivering violently from the cold, for the wind was in the north-east.

"Nice thing, I don't think," he grumbled aloud, "to drag me up from the warm kitchen as if I was some common chimbley sweep. I can't see no blessed chimbley what ain't smoking. That there old Slaney ought to be boiled. He's always a-grumbling about something."

Snark passed to the second row of pots, behind which the four Fourth-Formers were hiding. Again

he moved from pot to pot, peering down into the interior of each.

The pots were sufficiently high to effectually hide the Fourth-Formers. As Clifford watched the unsuspecting porter an idea struck him, and he chuckled inwardly.

As Snark reached the last pot Clifford turned and grinned to his chums, at the same time putting his finger to his lip as a command for silence.

The school porter had his head half-buried in the chimney, when Clifford crept softly behind him. As Snark raised himself erect the Junior captain seized the sack and thrust it quickly over the porter's head and shoulders.

"Ow! Lemme go! Help! Murder! Police!" yelled the unhappy Snark in a muffled voice.

In vain he struggled to remove the sack, whilst the four Fourth-Formers roared with laughter at his antics. All he succeeded in doing was to raise clouds of soot. Suddenly he lurched against the brickwork, and fell headlong in the snow.

"Come on, my sons; let's do a bunk whilst we've got the chance!" cried Clifford.

"It seems a bit rotten to leave him here," protested Marker, in a whisper.

"That be blowed!" answered Clifford unfeelingly. "It's as good as putting our heads in the noose to let the beast see us."

"My word, Cluffy," said Bayne, "you are in a mess!"

"Well, so'd you be if you'd been mucking about with that sack like I've been. Come on down and help me wash it off."

Fortunately they succeeded in reaching the lavatory without meeting anyone. Once more Clifford began scrubbing operations.

"Well, that's a good job over," said Clifford gleefully. "Old Slaney'll think it was just a temporary stoppage of his chimney, and Jack Noble's worms need never know that our little jape failed."

"But what about Snarky?" asked Marker.

"Oh, he won't know it was us who put the sack over him unless you're fool enough to tell him," snapped Clifford.

Meanwhile, Jack Noble and Bob Russell were discussing the affair of Mr. Slaney's smoky chimney.

"I can't make it out at all," said Jack Noble. "I bet Clifford and his rotters are at the bottom of it. We met him smothered in soot just now. But they wouldn't be fools enough to purposely block up old Slaney's chimney."

"Supposing they took Slaney's chimney for ours?" asked Bob Russell, with a twinkle in his eye.

"By jumbo, I believe you're right, Bob!" cried the Third Eleven skipper, springing up from his chair. "Let's do the Sexton Blake dodge. It won't take us a minute to climb up to the roof and have a peep round."

No sooner had the two fags reached the roof, however, than they were struck dumb with horror at the sight that greeted their eyes.

Snark had stumbled to his feet, and in an effort to wriggle his arms and shoulders free from the sack which enveloped them, he had stumbled over the low parapet which bordered the flat part of the roof, and had rolled down the slope beyond to the zinc gutter which ran along the outer edge.

The greater part of the school porter's body was resting upon the gutter. This alone was keeping him from a fall of close on a hundred feet down into the quad below.

The school porter was conscious of his danger, for he lay, scarce making a movement, with his fingers gripping the edge of the tiles. To do Clifford and his cronies justice, they had never dreamed that Snark could possibly be in any danger when they left him in his unhappy predicament.

Jack Noble was the first to get over his terrified amazement. Without a word, he sprang across the intervening space and over the parapet. Then, crawling on hands and knees, for the descent here was steep, his hands at last gripped the sack.

"Keep still, Snark," he shouted, for he recognised the porter by his uniform. "We'll save you! Come on, Bob; give me a hand. I can't hoist him up by myself."

Bob Russell was on the spot almost before the young skipper had finished speaking. With a heave the two fags tugged at the porter's body, and dragged him into safety. A moment later the gutter, loosened from its staples by the weight of the porter and by the tugging of the fags, came away with an ugly crack, and fell with a crash into the quad below.

In a few moments Jack Noble had torn the sack from Snark's head. The porter gazed about him in a stupefied way, though his face and head, covered as they were with soot, gave him rather a comical appearance. But neither of the fags saw the comic side of the affair at the moment.

"Poor old Snarky!" said Jack Noble sympathetically. "You've been through a rough time of it. If you're feeling all right now, we'd better be getting downstairs."

"You young willains!" shouted Snark suddenly, springing to his feet, and shaking Jack Noble violently. "You done this!

You went werry near being the death o' me. I won't stand it no longer. You put that there sack on me, and left me to fall off the roof. I'll take you to Mr. Slaney and the Head. I'll teach yer to play cruel, willainous tricks on me."

"Here, steady on, Snarky!" protested Bob Russell. "We're right out of this, honour bright. We're not cads. We wouldn't leave a man on a roof in a sack. If it hadn't been for Noble here, you'd have been down there by this time."

The porter shuddered as he saw Russell's finger pointing in the direction of the quad.

He persisted in taking the two fags with him to Mr. Slaney's room, and the boys made no demur. The Third Form-master listened to the porter's tale with growing anger, but he refused to believe that Noble or Russell had played such a caddish trick upon the porter.

"It's impossible, Snark," he concluded. "After you went on the roof Noble and Russell were with me in this room driving away the smoke. On the other hand, you should be very grateful to both boys for saving you from a possible fatal accident. Rest assured, though, Snark, that the perpetrators of this

audacious assault upon you shall be severely punished. I will myself look into the matter at once."

Whether Mr. Slaney had his suspicions aroused against Clifford and his cronies it was impossible to say. Anyway, as he made a tour of the Forms in search of the culprits he came across Clifford still attempting to scrub himself clean in the lavatory.

After that denial was useless. The four Fourth-Formers were ordered to follow the master at once to his room, where, after a severe lecture, each was given half a dozen handers with Mr. Slaney's stoutest cane. Mr. Slaney also threatened to report the matter to the Head.

Strange to say, the Fourth-Formers were not at all abashed when they left the master's study. They were hardened to handers, and even though Mr. Slaney was an adept in the art of caning, they considered that they had got off lightly. They determined to seek out Snark and bribe him heavily in case there was any trouble with the Head.

"It'd have been a bit rotten for us if old Snark had fallen off the roof," said Marker. "I wouldn't have been able to sleep at night."

"Oh, dry up!" cried the others, shuddering. The enormity of their crime was just coming home to them.

As Clifford reached his study door he found Jack Noble and Russell standing there.

"Clear off, you young worms!" commanded Clifford. "We don't want you hanging about here."

"All right, Clifty; we've only come to see you because we're compelled to," replied the Third Eleven skipper, following the cronies into the study. "Our chaps want you to agree to pax till after the

holidays. Will you shake hands on it?"

"Christmas is the time for peace and goodwill, you know," added Bob Russell.

"Oh, if you like," agreed Clifford, winking slyly at his chums. "Here's my flipper."

The rival captains shook hands, and Noble and Russell took their departure.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bayne and Prince at Loggerheads—The Third Football Meeting—Clifford's Hoosepige Jape.

CLIFFORD crept to the study door, opened it, and looked down the corridor. Noble and Russell had disappeared from view.

"Diddle-dum-dee!" he sang, hopping round the room. "Aren't those little worms the limit? So honourable, so trustworthy, so straightforward! They're the essence of honesty, and I love 'em! Some author chap'll be putting them in his books one of these days."

His three chums looked at him wonderingly. "I reckon you've let us down nicely," said Bayne

## "JACK NOBLE'S CHRISTMAS TOUR."

Another Fine Complete  
Tale of Jack Noble

and

Pelham School

WILL APPEAR

**NEXT THURSDAY.**

at last, with a flushed face. "I didn't want to chum up with the rotters."

The Junior captain stopped suddenly, and darted a keen glance at his cronies.

"My dear Bayne," he drawled, with a sneer, "your parents are wasting their money on you at Pelham. We can only train brains here; we can't supply 'em to empty heads."

"Which means you're an idiot, Bayne," grinned Prince.

Bayne leapt off the corner of the table on which he had been sitting, seized an ebony ruler, and flung it with all his force at Prince. It missed the Fifth-Former's head by a few inches, but shattered the glass of a picture hanging upon the wall behind him. "You rotten cad!" yelled Prince; and flung himself upon Bayne.

Both boys had completely lost their tempers. With flushed faces and blazing eyes each struggled to throw the other. Bayne had his leg twined round Prince's calf, whilst Prince, with a hand clasped about his adversary's throat, was jerking back Bayne's head.

"Stop it, you fools!" roared Clifford. "You'll have one of the masters here."

The noise was terrific. Round and round the room they struggled and fought, knocking over the chairs, and tearing up the carpet. Then with a crash that shook the walls, they both fell to the floor.

Before they could spring up and get to grips again Clifford and Marker interposed.

"If you don't stop it, Prince, I'll give you the soundest thrashing you've ever had!" cried Clifford, seizing the other's wrists.

"You're a silly ass to lose your temper over a bit of chaff!" hissed Marker, throwing his arms round Bayne's chest.

"I'll wipe the earth with the beast!" shouted Bayne. "He's no right to call me an idiot. Nor has Clifford. Let me get at him. I'll pulverise him!"

"Come on and try!" yelled Prince. "I'll teach you to sling rulers at me! I'll—Ow! Dry up, Clifford! You're breaking my wrist!"

"This is a jolly fine peace meeting!" grinned Marker. "Full of brotherly love, Christmas cheer—eh, what!"

"Look here, Bayne," said Clifford, "I'll admit my language was a bit—er—severe, but you'd no right to sling a ruler at Prince. Why didn't you sling it at me?"

"You didn't call me an idiot," said Bayne surlily.

Marker had released him now, and he stood arranging his collar and tie, scowling all the while at Prince.

"I wasn't quite so bold as Prince," said Clifford, "but that was what I meant. I thought you saw that I'd only been bluffing the Noble and Russell insects."

"Bluffing 'em!" repeated Bayne. "Do you mean you're not going to keep to your promise? Ain't there going to be pax between us and the Third Eleven till after the holidays?"

"Why should we condescend to fall in with their plans?" replied the Junior captain, chuckling. "I don't suppose for a moment the worms mean to keep to their promise, and if they do—well, it'll give us a splendid chance of wiping off some old scores. If the worms think we're agreeing to the pax business, it'll put 'em right off their guard, and give us an excellent chance of getting quits."

FOOTBALL LIBRARY.—No. 14.

"Strikes me as being a bit low down," suggested Marker, who was quite a decent fellow apart from Clifford's influence.

"A high-souled person like yourself would think so," sniffed the Junior captain. "Comes of having such a sanctified name, I expect."

Marker turned scarlet and subsided.

"Have you thought out any wheezes?" asked Prince.

"We might try that hosepipe dodge I was speaking about the other day," answered Clifford. "But first of all you and Bayne had better shake hands to show there's no malice between you. That picture front'll cost you one-and-sixpence, Bayne."

Prince and Bayne shook hands rather sheepishly.

"Good! Now look here, chaps, there's no possible way of getting out of that rotten football match. If we refuse to play it'll look as if we funk it."

"Which, of course, we don't," suggested Marker.

"Shut up!" commanded Clifford. "If a thaw sets in and makes the field a river of slush we'll be all right. On the other hand, if it still keeps freezing, and Lecky says we can play, we'll have to turn out."

"It'll be jolly hard and slippery on the frozen ground," remarked Prince. "How about touch-lines? We sha'n't be able to see 'em if they're covered with snow."

"Oh, that's easily managed," replied the Junior captain. "They'll dig a trench round the field for the touch-lines, and the ground'll be no harder or more slippery for us than for the Third worms. So you can reckon the match is pretty certain to come off."

"Well, the Third louts are holding a meeting after tea to-morrow in Noble's study," went on Clifford. "If we could fix up a fountain display for 'em when they're all packed in the room, there's a chance of the Head kicking up such a row that the match'll be abandoned. We didn't have much luck with the chimney business, but this can't go wrong. Anyway, it'll make it precious uncomfortable for the little cads, and that's something worth trying for."

"I'd much rather leave the kids alone," said Marker, "but as I didn't shake hands with Noble, and made no promises, I'll be in it with you, Clifty."

The others agreed in just as half-hearted a manner. Somehow, Clifford's wheezes had a knack of going wrong. The four then began to discuss the details.

Tea was in progress the following afternoon in the great dining-hall when Clifford, Bayne, Marker, and Prince crept out into the corridor. They had purposely seated themselves at the end of one of the long tables near the doorway, and Mr. Slaney, the Third Form-master, in charge of the boys, was so deeply interested in the political news in his daily paper that he did not notice the boys' departure.

"There go the beauties!" whispered Bob Russell. "Look out for trouble, Jack. You can see they're after no good by the leer on their faces."

"Posing as a thought-reader now, Bob?" grinned Jack Noble. "They've kept pax up till now, anyway. They're not such utter cads as to break their promise."

"You wait and see," replied Bob Russell mysteriously.

Meanwhile, the four Fourth-Formers crept noiselessly up the staircase. It was now almost dark, but all four of them could have found their way about the school blindfolded.

Fire-drill was a part of the school routine, and



upon every floor, at certain spots, there hung two coils of hose and a row of buckets. A hydrant for connecting the hose was fixed to the wall near by.

Clifford and his cronies went straight to the hose-pipe. Just near the fire-fighting apparatus there was a window which looked out into the quad. This window was immediately above the window of Jack Noble's study, which was on the floor below.

"Everything's all serene," said Clifford, with a chuckle, throwing up the window. "Fix the hose on the hydrant, Bayne."

The Fourth-Former carried out the instructions, and Clifford lowered the hosepipe out of the window.

"Look sharp, Cliffy!" suddenly cried Prince, from the head of the stairs. "I can hear 'em tramping out of hall."

The Junior captain shut down the window and bolted down the staircase, whilst his chums still waited above for him. Clifford reappeared a few minutes later, grinning like a chimpanzee.

"It's all fixed up," he chuckled. "All we've got to do now is to wait for the little rotters. We'll give 'em pax—gallons of it!"

Looking over the top of the staircase cautiously, the four cronies saw the Third Eleven players come leaping up the stairs two at a time. Jack Noble's team were in the highest spirits, as they always were when they met to discuss football, or to play it.

"Come along, my sons!" cried Jack Noble, flinging open his study door, and switching on the electric light. "All are welcome, and all seats are free—if you can find any."

The fags trooped in after their captain. There were sixteen of them in all—high-spirited youngsters, keen as mustard, and tough as leather.

It was a tight fit. Bob Russell, the Third Eleven centre-half, shared the study with Noble, and the room was so small that it was almost possible to stretch from wall to wall with the fingers.

But the sixteen fags got in somehow. They stood round the walls shoulder to shoulder.

"My aunt!" said Fighting Mac, with a broad grin. "It's packed we are like a Suffragette meeting. Has anybody got a tin-opener to bide the time when we want to get out?"

"Get it off your chest, young Jack!"

The boys focussed their eyes upon their skipper.

"What I've got to tell you won't take me long, my sons," began Jack Noble. "Lecky tells me that he has held a meeting of the football committee, and they are agreed that unless the weather sets in warmer, the match shall be played to-morrow. If Clifford's lot back out and refuse to play, we're to be adjudged the winners, and presented with Major Waring's medals."

Major Waring, a friend of the Head's, always presented a set of silver medals to the winners of an inter-school football match that was played before the end of Christmas term.

"Hurrah! Good old Lecky!"

"What about our team?"

"Lecky's arranged for four seniors to be on each side," went on the Third Eleven skipper. "To avoid any dispute, the committee have put in a hat the names of seniors willing to play in the match. We've got Lawson major, Simpkins, Green, and Hawkins. Under the circumstances, I regret to say that I shall have to ask Grimes, Jones, MacIvaine, and Price to stand down for this match."

"That's all right, skipper, so long as we lick

Clifford's crew," cried Price, without the slightest disappointment in his voice.

"Hear, hear!" agreed MacIvaine, Jones, and Grimes.

"Thank you, my sons," said Jack Noble, an anxious look giving way to a smile. "Clifford's been given Hales, Goodwin, Birtles, and Reynolds."

"Phew!"

A gasp of dismay went round the room. The four players mentioned were the pick of the First Eleven. Clifford had had all the luck in the balloting.

"By gum, it won't be a walk-over for us!" cried Fighting Mac.

"We don't want a walk-over," replied the Third Eleven skipper; "we want a good hard fight of it. So buck up, all of you, to-morrow, my sons, and play your level—"

Jack Noble broke off suddenly, and stared up at the ceiling.

A stream of water had descended upon him as he stood in the centre of the room. He sprang to one side, cannoning into Bob Russell and Murphy, but the three were pushed by the other fags back to the centre of the room right underneath the torrent of water.

Those who remained dry fairly screamed with laughter as the water descended upon the unfortunate ones, but the former soon grew angry as it splashed upon themselves.

"Open the door! Let us get out! Sure, we'll all be drowned!" sang out Murphy.

In an instant a panic seized the fags, as a rush was made for the door. In the rush made to evade the descending torrent the fags jostled one another as in a scrimmage before the enemy's goal-mouth.

"Open the door!" yelled the fags. "Hurry up, some of you! It isn't our bath night!"

But those nearest the door were unable to move it an inch. It was not locked, for the key was on the inside. Packed as the room was with boys, those tugging at the door had not sufficient space to exert their full strength.

"Some rotters are hanging on to the door!" shouted Valence. "I can't move it. Go easy, you chaps at the back; don't bust my ribs in."

"Steady on, my sons!" shouted Jack Noble, making himself heard above the din. "Don't go loony. A little water won't hurt you."

The water still descended in a merciless stream. Soon the floor was covered, and the fags were standing ankle-deep in it. Moreover, though they did not know it, it was pouring out from under the door, wetting the feet of Clifford, Bayne, and Prince, who, with grinning faces, were hanging on to the door handle outside in the corridor.

Jack Noble stood staring at the window, from the top of which the water poured in. The end of the hosepipe was almost indistinguishable in the uncertain light.

"I've got it!" suddenly cried the young skipper; and, heedless of the stream pouring down, he tugged at the top half of the window-frame.

Down came the sash with a rush. The hosepipe, jammed between the top of the sash and the frame, was released, and swung out of the room, and continued its downpour into the quad.

"Bravo, Jack!" shouted the fags.

"We'll skin the brutes who did this!" yelled Murphy.

Fighting Mac and Taffy Evans forced their way through the crowd around the door.

"Get back, kids. Give us elbow room," cried the Scots boy.

He and Taffy seized the handle, and braced themselves for a mighty tug. A chuckle sounded from outside the door.

"One, two, three—pull!" shouted Mac.

Clifford and his cronies had overheard this brief command, and had promptly bolted. As Mac and Taffy pulled at the door handle they met with no resistance. The door flew open, sending them crashing into the boys behind them, and toppling several of them to the ground.

When the fags rushed out of the room and peered down over the top of the staircase, all they heard of the enemy was the scampering of their feet on the ground floor.

"They've done us in the eye absolutely," said Bob Russell, looking round him. "There'll be trouble for us if the Head or a master spots this mess."

"The sooner it's mopped up the better," replied Jack Noble. "I'm going downstairs at once to square Snarky to bring up his pails and flannels. You might pop upstairs, Bob, old chap, and turn off the water tap."

"What are we going to give the wasters who've done this?" cried Taffy Evans. "Ain't we going to get our own back on 'em?"

"First of all, find your hare before you cook it," grinned Jack Noble.

"It's easy to find 'em," retorted Taffy. "I'll bet you a plum pudding they're Clifford's lot. Who else could it be?"

The Third Eleven skipper looked puzzled.

"But they agreed to keep pax," he argued. "They wouldn't be rotters enough to go back on their word."

"Wouldn't they?" sniffed the Welsh boy; and Bob Russell and Fighting Mac nodded their heads in agreement. "They ain't all so beastly honest as you, Jack."

"Anyway," answered the skipper, "if we can prove it's Clifford's gang we'll give 'em the gruelling of their giddy lives."

"I should say so!" roared the fags.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### The Snowman—An Early Goal—Tripped—Jack Noble Leaves the Field.

**J**ACK NOBLE had found a warm corner in Snark's heart after that rescue business. Though he facetiously remarked that Master Noble would be the death of him with his tricks, he and his assistant at once went to the third floor, and quickly mopped up the water.

Jack Noble and Bob Russell, and several others had been compelled to change their clothing, but what worried them most was the indisputable evidence they had received that Clifford and his cronies had broken their promise of pax to them, and had played them such a shabby trick. Several fags had seen Clifford, Bayne, and Prince hanging on to the handle of Jack Noble's study door.

"The cads! The out-and-out bounders!" cried Murphy indignantly. "After this the pax business is knocked on the head."

"Rather, laddie!" cried Fighting Mac. "I vote we go and tackle 'em at once, and give 'em a good hiding."

FOOTBALL LIBRARY.—No. 14.

The fags were undressing in their dormitory when the discussion had been resumed. Fighting Mac suggested that the Third Eleven, armed with pillows and bolsters, should attack Clifford and his cronies in the Fourth Form dormitory.

"No, no," replied Jack Noble. "We'll give 'em socks some other time. Better wait till after the match to-morrow."

And so it was agreed.

The next day opened exceedingly cold but bright. All the morning the menservants in the school were busily engaged in digging the touch-lines round the pitch. The snow on the ground was several inches thick, but frozen so hard that Jack Noble found it almost impossible to dig a hole in it with the heel of his football boot.

There had been examinations in all Forms during the morning, so that at two o'clock, there being no further classes for the day, a huge crowd had gathered round the field.

Clifford made one last attempt to get out of the match.

As Lecky, who was referee for the match, poked his head into the Junior Eleven dressing-room he was surprised to see that Clifford and his cronies were not in their football rig.

"The other chaps are just going out," cried Lecky sharply. "Why haven't you got ready?"

"Fact is, Lecky," replied Clifford, turning scarlet, "we—we think the ground's a bit too dangerous for football. Supposing we trip over those dug-out touch-lines, or come a nasty cropper on the frozen ground?"

"And supposing Noble's team, who are a lot smaller than your eleven, are running the same risks?" retorted the school captain. "What have you to grumble at? If you funk the match, say so at once, and Major Waring will award the medals to Noble's team straight away."

"It's nothing of the kind" sniffed the Junior captain. "We're going to give the young swankers a thorough trouncing. Only don't blame us if they get hurt."

Lecky went away a bit puzzled. Was there a threat in Clifford's words? Did his team intend to play rough from the start?

Major Waring, in a fur-trimmed overcoat, was seated beside the Head in the pavilion stand when the two teams eventually turned out amidst rousing cheers from the spectators. Jack Noble's eleven were in white, whilst Clifford's men were in scarlet.

The snow-covered trees sparkled like diamonds in the bright sunshine; everywhere the snow gleamed with dazzling whiteness.

As the term was practically over, for school would break up early on the morrow, the boys of the Lower Forms were in the highest spirits. They invaded the playing pitch, and quickly made a snowman, whom they planted between the goalposts. This they pelted with snowballs to their hearts' content.

The fags scurried off the field as Jack Noble led his men towards the snowman.

"Rah, rah, rah!" yelled the fags. "Try a pot-shot, Jack!"

Bob Russell, with a grin, threw the ball across to his skipper.

Jack Noble took a running kick. The football caught the snow figure with a resounding thud on the side of the Sloper-like head, and shot into the net.

"Goal!" yelled every fag in the crowd. "That's the style, Jack! Keep it up, old son!"

To demolish the snowman was the work of a few moments, and Lecky, as referee, whistled up the rival captains.

Jack Noble had arranged his men as follows: Evans; Lawson major, Macalpine; Green, Russell, Hawkins; Valence, Lawson minor, Noble, Drake, Simpkins.

But a gasp of disappointment went up as the fags saw Clifford's team take up their positions. Clifford had had all the luck in the draw for seniors, and with Goodwin, the First goalkeeper, between the posts, and Hales and Birtles, the First backs, deposing his own men, he had as strong a defence as any school eleven could have put into the field.

The rest of his men were Jellett, Marker, King; Reynolds (First Eleven), Bayne, Clifford, Prince, Webb.

Clifford won the toss, and chose the goal where a stiff, keen breeze was behind his men.

Phip! went the whistle.

Jack Noble, grim and determined, kicked off with a side-glance to Drake. Bayne charged the little inside-right heavily, but before Drake went sprawling in the snow he had passed the ball to Simpkins, and away streaked the Sixth-Former for the Reds' goal.

Though the ground was slippery, and the snow clogged his boots, Simpkins circled round King at right-half, and then, as Birtles ran out to charge him, Simpkins shot hard for the net.

Only a Meredith could have brought off such a slanting shot from a sharp run. Nevertheless, it beat Hales all ends up, and Goodwin had to punch out at the expense of a corner.

"Bravo, Infants! Play up the Whites!"

The exciting opening had stirred the crowd of Pelhamites. All were agreed that Noble's team hadn't the slightest chance of winning against the heavier Fourth-Formers, assisted by the pick of the senior team.

Simpkins placed the ball for the corner-kick. Jack Noble and his forwards round the goal-mouth watched him with wolfish eyes. From a splendid kick the ball came soaring into the pack of players. Jack Noble jumped high, and with a twist of his head drove the ball hard down at Goodwin. To the amusement of the onlookers it caught the goalie fairly on the nose, and rebounded into play, where Hales instantly seized it, and banged it across the touch-line.

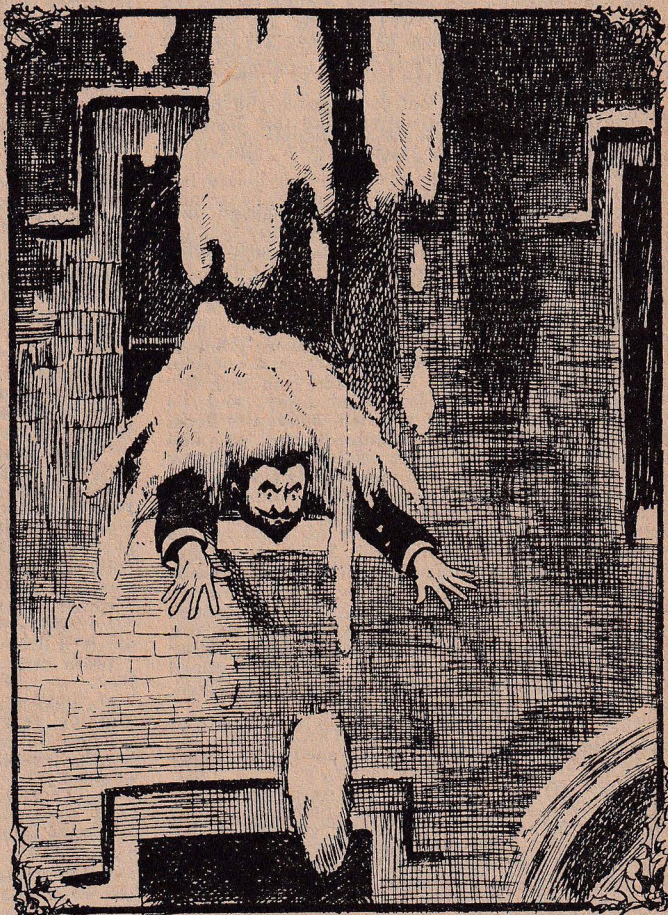
"Hard luck, the Whites!"

"Well tried, Noble!"

For quite five minutes after this the ball was in Clifford's half of the field. The fags kept up an

irresistible attack. They had got on the spot, and they meant to make the most of their opportunities. But it was not their lucky day!

Three times in succession Goodwin had the greatest difficulty in saving shots, first from Russell, then from Valence, and finally from Jack Noble. But he managed it somehow, much to the disappointment of Noble's men.



As Monsieur Gerard thrust his head out of the window a huge pile of snow slid from the roof on to his head.

Hales and Birtles had to play all they knew to stop that grim onslaught, and the nippy youngsters, who could get about on the frozen snow more quickly than could the Reds, gave them a regular twisting.

Clifford's face flushed an angry red. He whispered to Bayne and Prince as the ball was thrown in from the touch-line. Jack Noble was near the half-way line when he received the leather. Seeing an opening, he streaked away in one of his characteristic

dribbling movements, and made for the enemy's goal. The snow made very little difference to him.

Right between Clifford and Bayne the young skipper went like a flash. Marker moved forward to intercept the centre-forward, but Jack Noble tricked him so easily that the crowd roared with laughter. The big Sixth Form backs rushed out now to tackle the forward.

Jack Noble glanced about him. His fellow-forwards were well up. Hales danced a hornpipe before the young skipper, who was keeping an eye on Valence all the time. Then, as the back got tired of dodging his opponent, and swept in to charge him down, Jack Noble passed the ball out to Valence.

Racing round the astonished Hales like lightning, the centre-forward clapped his hands. At once, as soon as he had received it, the outside-left sent back the sphere. It came in a graceful curve right on to Jack Noble's toe.

Bang!

Like a shot from a cannon the ball whizzed past Birtles and Goodwin, and went climbing the net.

The Whites had opened the scoring. Jack Noble had given his team the lead.

"Bravo, Noble! Well done, the Whites!"

"Throw up the sponge, seniors! The kids are too strong for you!"

The roars from the crowd were terrific. The fags were delirious with joy. That goal was a surprise for them all.

Clifford's angry flush had died away, and its place had been taken by a sullen, vindictive look. At the piph! of the whistle he kicked off, and charged straight into Jack Noble. The young skipper saw the gleam in his enemy's eye, and hopped aside, but too late. Clifford shot his leg between Noble's own, and the centre-forward went down with a heavy thud, striking his head on the heel of Russell's boot, and lay still.

"Foul!" roared the onlookers. "Cad! Turn him off, Lecky!"

The school captain stopped the game. Through the press of the players he had not seen that deliberate trip. He and Bob Russell, who was trembling with rage, hoisted Jack Noble to his feet. Blood was pouring out from a nasty cut on the forehead, and the fag was quite unconscious.

"That rotter Clifford deliberately fouled him!" panted the centre-half.

"Never mind that now," replied Lecky. "Here, Macalpine, give Russell and myself a hand. We must take him off to the dressing-room."

The three of them carried Jack Noble to the pavilion, where Lecky quickly gave him a pick-me-up. The young skipper soon recovered consciousness, though he was dazed from the fall and the blow on his forehead. Lecky soon had the wound strapped up with sticking-plaster.

"I'm all right now, Lecky," cried Jack Noble, staggering to his feet. "It's a shame to stop the game. I can turn out again."

"You'd better not, Noble," answered Lecky, admiring the youngster's grit. "We've only got ten minutes to go now to half-time. The rest'll do you good. Go out now, and maybe you'll crock yourself up for the match."

"Ain't he a stunner?" said Fighting Mac, when the three were on the field again. "He ain't said a word about the fouling. I feel like going to Clifford and punching his nose for him!"

They reached the centre of the field. Clifford, looking rather sheepish, was whispering to Bayne, Prince, and Marker.

"Come here, Clifford!" said Lecky sternly. "Everyone is telling me that you deliberately fouled Jack Noble. I didn't see it myself, or I would have turned you off the field. As it is, I give you the benefit of the doubt. But let me warn you. Any more rough play on your part, and you'll have to leave the field."

Nevertheless, Lecky awarded a free-kick, which Fighting Mac took, the ball hitting the upright.

Play for the next two or three minutes was quiet. Even Clifford's men were ashamed of their skipper's tactics.

But the Whites, without their pivot, were sadly handicapped. Drake had gone in the centre-forward position, but he was streets behind his skipper as a leader of the attack. Time and again Drake was robbed of the ball by Marker, who was now playing a strong game. And it was from one of his passes that Reynolds at last secured a goal, the Sixth-Former taking the leather along the touch-line, and with difficulty keeping his feet on the hard, frozen surface, sent the ball into the net before Taffy Evans, who threw himself to the snow-clad ground, could intercept it.

"Goal!"

A goal went up from the fags. Even the Fourth-Formers amongst the crowd declined to cheer. They were still disgusted with Clifford. But the Junior captain's face was wreathed with smiles.

"Keep it up hot and strong!" he whispered to his forwards. "They're all at sea without Noble. With another one or two goals up we'll have nothing to fear from the young swankers."

In silence the ball was kicked off. Soon it came out to Bob Russell. The centre-half dribbled it between Marker and King, and seeing that all the forwards were well marked, he lunged the leather towards the goal. But Birtles got his foot in the way, and sent it back far into the Whites' half, where Clifford was standing well up. The Junior captain had only two backs and the goalkeeper to beat.

He made a feint of passing the ball out to Prince, and deceived Lawson major, then with a rush straight at Macalpine, he sprang to one side just before reaching the back and kicked at the ball. Clifford's toe almost missed the sphere altogether. Instead of sending it over the line at a cracking pace, it just rolled slowly towards the net.

With a grunt of delight, Taffy Evans jumped out to meet the ball, but his foot slipped on the treacherous ground, and he went down with a crash on the frozen snow beside the leather as it slowly rolled over the goal-line.

Clifford's side were two up.

"Goal!"

"What, another!"

"Oh, hard luck, the Whites!"

The shot hadn't deserved to score, and a gasp of dismay ran round the spectators. But for Jack Noble's absence Clifford's team would never have got those two goals. That was the general feeling with seniors and fags alike.

A few moments later the half-time whistle screamed out, and both sides moved off for the pavilion, glad of the respite.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

## Six Goals to Two—The Snow Battle—Medals for the Fags—Home for the Holidays.

"COME on, my sons; I'm not dead yet!" cried Jack Noble, a smile flickering over his pale face. He was feeling weak and shaky, but he said nothing of this to Lecky or his chums.

"We're ready, skipper!"

The teams lined up for the second half. Clifford could not restrain a chuckle as he saw Jack Noble's wane face.

Play opened rather quietly. Clifford's men were content with their lead, whilst the Whites did not wish to force the pace till their captain had become accustomed again to the keen air.

Then, bit by bit, Jack Noble warmed up. The weakness had left him now, and his old-time enthusiasm and confidence had returned to him.

The fags cheered lustily as he led the attack with all his usual skill. By clever judgment and by long, swinging passes out to the wings the Whites' forwards again and again worked the ball into their opponents' territory. Well it was for Clifford's side that he had three such stout defenders as Goodwin, Hales, and Birtles in front of the net, for Jack Noble alone got within an ace of scoring at least five times in as many minutes.

"By George, the kids'll win yet if they can only keep it up!" thought Lecky. And most of the onlookers thought the same.

The snow-covered ground, though very slippery, was quite a good substitute for a grassy pitch, and the touch-lines so far had not caused any serious fall.

"Those medals are as good as ours, old chap," whispered Clifford, with a grin, to Bayne. "Noble's crocking up fast. He's making the pace too hot for himself. We've only got to pack our goal to win hands down."

Bayne could only grin in reply, for the ball was coming his way from a goal-kick. But before the ball reached him Bob Russell shot forward, and got his fair head to it, and away went the leather in a splendid pass down the field to Jack Noble.

Again the young skipper cut circles round Marker, and again Hales rushed out to charge him down. Through the Sixth-Former's legs Jack Noble poked the ball, and sprinted after it. Then he drew Birtles aside by feinting a pass to Valence, and eventually banged it into the net past Goodwin, before that astute goalie had realised what had happened.

"Goal!"

"What a beauty!"

"Good on you, Noble!"

"Play up, the Whites! Show 'em how to play, kids!"

All the sympathy, all the cheers were being given by the onlookers to the fags. Not a shout went up for Clifford's men.

They were two all now. Lecky gave Clifford a sharp glance as they lined up for the kick-off, and the Junior captain turned scarlet.

Away went the Reds' forwards in a determined rush, but they were met by just as determined a defence. Clifford had not gone far with the ball before he was neatly robbed of it by Bob Russell. Out went the sphere to Simpkins. The Sixth-Former, hampered by King, sent it back to the centre.

"Bravo!"

"Noble's got it again!"

"Here's another goal!"

It looked as if the Third Eleven skipper was going through on his own again in one of his characteristic bursts, but he deceived the Reds' defenders absolutely. Dribbling the ball with a fine turn of speed, he waited till he had almost reached the penalty-line, and then, looking about him to see whether he was still onside, the young skipper back-heeled to Lawson minor, a few yards in his rear.

Bang!

The little inside-left caught the ball on the run, and shot it with all his force at the top corner of the net. Goodwin got his fingers to it, but the shot was far too hot for him to stop, and with a grunt of dismay and an aching wrist he saw the ball roll down to his feet.

The Whites had regained the lead.

"Well played, Infants!" roared the fags enthusiastically.

Lawson minor's fellow-forwards rushed up to shake his hand with grinning faces. Even Lawson major, his big brother, shouted out some words of encouragement.

"Look after yourself, Jack!" whispered Russell. "Cliffy's glaring about him like a tiger!"

"Let him glare," replied Jack Noble. "He won't catch me again by tripping."

Sure enough, Clifford soon after made another attempt to foul the young centre-forward, but this time Jack Noble leapt nimbly aside, and the Junior captain missed his balance, and gave himself a nasty jar as he struck the hard ground.

When he struggled again to his feet, whilst the fags round the ropes openly jeered at him, it was to see Goodwin throwing himself at full length in a futile attempt to save a clinking shot from Jack Noble's toe.

"Goal!"

"Bravo, Noble!"

Jack Noble's team were now two goals ahead, but still they kept up the pressure. Clifford's side, despite the Sixth-Form backs and goalkeeper, had gone all to pieces.

From one of Drake's shots, just tipped over the bar by Goodwin, a corner was soon after awarded. Valence took the kick. The ball came over splendidly, and Bob Russell headed in, but Goodwin punched out. The ball this time came across to Valence, who sent it through a forest of legs into the net.

It was five goals to two now. But yet another goal was scored close on time by Bob Russell with a drive along the ground that gave the big Sixth-Former no chance whatever of saving.

Phip! It was the long whistle. The game was over. Jack Noble's team had won Major Waring's medals and the snow battle by six goals to two.

Yelling with delight, the fags dived under the ropes and invaded the ground. Round and round they carried Jack Noble till the young skipper was almost blue with cold. Then, as Jack Noble at last bolted for the dressing-room, the fags began a snow-ball attack upon the Shell.

At first the lordly Fourth-Formers did not deign to notice the Infants, but they got such a pasting from well-directed snowballs that they were bound to do something in defence.

The great snow battle that followed, and in which Jack Noble's team and Clifford's side took part, will live long in the annals of Pelham.

Naturally enough, Jack Noble, Bob Russell, Fighting Mac, and Taffy Evans singled out Clifford, Bayne, Marker, and Prince in the snowball onslaught. Clifford & Co. got such a trouncing that they were at last compelled to beat a retreat at top speed.

Clifford's face was very red, for a lot of missiles had lodged there.

The fags pursued the Fourth-Formers to the doors of the schoolhouse. Taffy Evans, still full of wrath for the hosepipe trick Clifford & Co. had played upon them, as well as for the foul trip upon Jack Noble, would have pursued the Fourth-Formers to their studies.

"Never mind about the pax business," he cried. "Let's rag 'em in the good old British fashion. Come on, the Infants!"

"No, no, old chap," protested Jack Noble. "It can't be did. The tea bell'll be ringing presently. And don't forget that Major Waring'll be there. It'll be a slap-up feed as it's the last night of term. And after that the medals'll be presented to us. Better give 'em a miss till after the holidays."

"Old Jack's right, as usual," said Bob Russell. "Much as I should like to give the cads a thorough trouncing, we must let 'em off till the holidays are over. To tackle 'em now'd only make trouble for ourselves."

"Very well, then," cried the Welsh boy. "But let 'em look out when the new term starts. They'll get all we owe 'em with double compound interest."

An hour later Jack Noble led his team on to the platform in hall, where Major Waring presented each player with a solid silver medal in commemoration of that day's victory. As Jack Noble received his medal the cheering was terrific.

Clifford & Co., at the back of hall, were almost mad with rage and envy as they witnessed their enemy's triumph. They slunk upstairs to their studies, and no one regretted their departure.

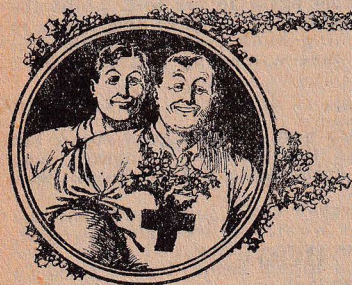
With rousing cheers that shook Pelham's fine old walls, the Head dismissed the Forms for the term. Late that evening some of the seniors left for their homes, but Jack Noble and his chums, and the vast majority of the Pelhamites did not leave till after breakfast the following morning.

Jack Noble had, however, arranged to meet Bob Russell and some of his team chums during the holidays, and their amusing experiences and adventures will be related in our next week's grand story.

THE END.

*(Another fine long, complete tale of Jack Noble will appear in "The Boy's Realm Football Library" next Thursday—usual price, one halfpenny.)*

## A STIRRING TALE OF LEAGUE FOOTBALL.



# THE BLUE CRUSADERS.

A Fine Football Yarn.

By A. S. HARDY.

### THE FIRST CHAPTERS RETOLD IN BRIEF.

HARRY EWING, DAVID MORGAN, ARTHUR DREW, and a big, sturdy lad named FOWKES, all residents of the Midland town of Browton, start a football club, and call themselves the Blue Crusaders. The Crusaders are to become famous in after years, but in their early days they meet with many setbacks and trials.

During the first two seasons they meet with wonderful success, and eventually they embrace professionalism, and join the Second Division of the Football League.

The first match of the next season finds the Crusaders heavily defeated. The prejudiced management have stood down Drew and Moran, substituting for them professionals.

Match after match is lost through this mistake, and at last Fowkes protests to the management, and when the Crusaders turn out against Stockton on the following Saturday, all the old, original players are included in the team.

Right from the start the great change is noticeable, and the Crusaders soon pile up a convincing margin of goals against their opponents.

*(Now read this week's instalment.)*

FOOTBALL LIBRARY.—No. 14.

### A CRUSHING DEFEAT.

THE enthusiasm of the spectators now knew no bounds. Mr. James Wentworth was radiant, the manager's face was wreathed in smiles.

"Until to-day," he said, "I had always doubted the wisdom of the starting of another football club in Browton, but the crowd here this afternoon, and the feeling they display, tells me that I was wrong. Egad, Fowkes was right, after all! This is the team we want. The forward line is almost ideal. Moran, at centre-half, is the best man I've seen for years. He's fairly shut the Stockton centre-forward up."

The second half was a repetition of the first. Stockton, at the start, broke away, desperate, bent on retrieving their position, and for a time were really dangerous. However, Hammond, Shepherd, and David Moran were on their best behaviour, and the one or two shots that were put in were dealt with by the Blue Crusaders' giant with a nonchalance that showed that he did not intend to be beaten, and at

last the wave of Stockton energy rolled back, and the Crusaders' halves, holding their forwards thoroughly in check, found time to devote to the attack, and the Blue Crusaders' forwards were seen in all their brilliance.

Brilliance it was! First of all the right wing scored with a fast, low hook shot. Then Harry Ewing got the ball near the halfway line, and—selfishly, many onlookers thought and said—came right away with it. Showing astonishing command of the ball, he dodged and tricked and swerved until, finding his opportunity, he went straight through and scored from eighteen yards out, giving the Stockton goalie no chance at all.

This fifth goal maddened the opposition. They were roused to a veritable pitch of frenzy, and, none too particular in their methods, they harassed the Crusaders' defence to such an extent that by sheer force of endeavour they broke through again and again.

Once or twice free-kicks for fouls held up their line and spoilt their game, but at length their centre-forward found himself in possession of the ball, and within ten yards of Fowkes. The giant rushed out, but the player shot hard and true.

Instinctively the giant goalkeeper lunged out with his right foot in a wild endeavour to reach the ball and save his goal. Boot and ball met together with astonishing force, and the leather was driven with a terrific impact into the face of the referee. His head shot back, and he fell like a log.

With a cry Fowkes dropped on his knees beside the prostrate and insensible official, whilst David Moran also came to his assistance.

The Stockton players, however, went on with the game. The open net yawned before them. They had heard no whistle blown, and their inside-right netted with an easy shot amidst shouts and cries and calls and bawls.

It was plain that the referee was too hurt to continue the game just then, and after a delay of a couple of minutes one of the linesmen took his place by mutual consent of the captains, and an additional linesman was selected from among the officials in the stand.

Finding that their goal did not count, the Stockton forwards withdrew into their shell, and for the remainder of the game were never seen.

Fowkes, for his part, leant against the goalposts and watched the game, excepting when the ball was played behind and he had to give one of his characteristic punts down the field.

The Blue Crusaders held the whip hand, and soon after the referee resumed his duties David Moran scored the sixth goal from a long drive, the Stockton goalkeeper being obstructed in his view, and never even seeing the ball until it found its way safely under the bar.

And so the Blue Crusaders won a sensational match by six goals to nil—the previous week's score reversed.

The result was heard with something like consternation throughout the land. It proved that the Blue Crusaders were a side to make history one way or another, and make it they did. Through this, their eighth match of the season, they had found their team, and success followed fast upon success. They went from victory to victory with never a halt.

Starting the season even worse than Liverpool did in 1905, they ended up with a wonderful record, and

easily topping the table, they were elected to the First Division of the Football League in their first season as a first-class football club. It was a record without a parallel in the game.

Little more remains to be said in order to make the history of the Blue Crusaders in the Second Division of the Football League complete.

The effect of the game with Stockton was far-reaching. The International players, who had until then suffered from swollen heads, and badly neglected their duty, fell into line, and the judicious blend of amateurs and professionals formed a homogeneous whole that was bound to succeed. They all played well to a man, with Harry Ewing, Arthur Drew, David Moran, and Will Fowkes perhaps the pick.

A word of reference must be made to Jasper Carne. That wily and cunning scoundrel was duly brought before the Bench, committed for trial, and condemned to three years' penal servitude and two years' police supervision.

Of Stephen Crane nothing was heard. It was rumoured that he had made his way to the Continent, and was playing as a professional footballer in Holland, but the rumour lacked confirmation. Anyhow, he was not missed in his old haunts in Browton.

James Jarvis, with the proceeds of his robberies at the works, made his way to Argentina, and, upon Messrs. Keith, Howse & Co. abandoning the prosecution, was allowed to remain there.

As for his brother, Albert Jarvis—or, rather, Albert King, as he is better known to us—he was reinstated as groundsman at Moor Field, and with all honour, for Jasper Carne, before he went to prison, had the grace to own up to the robbery in the Blue Crusaders' dressing-room.

And so the close of the football season found our old friends all united in one happy family. For at least four months they could look forward to a period of tranquillity. Until September brought again its thirst for football they could rest in peace.

## BOOK V.

Dick Green, International—Lucy Weston—In the Newcastle Infirmary—The Strange Man—Bound for Browton, Lanes.

IT was a warm afternoon in mid-August, so warm that most of the houses in Wilton Road, Byker-on-Tyne, had their windows open, and the people, hurrying hither and thither on business bent, showed a careless regard for the wearing of their attire.

In the top front bed-room of a cottage midway along the street, a young man, perhaps twenty-five years old, cigar in mouth, was busying himself with a mass of documents, letters, etc., which he was carefully reading, docketing, and placing in various envelopes, each of which bore a special direction in ink.

A trunk, a travelling-basket and a kit-bag, already labelled, rested at the foot of the bed, awaiting the arrival of a porter. Though within doors, the young man wore his straw hat well pulled down over his

eyes, perhaps to shade his face from the blaze of the sun, whose rays came in through the open window.

Ever and anon as he laboured he would start, raise his head, and listen intently to some imaginary sounds outside. Then he would resume his examination of the letters again with the same methodical deliberation.

Most of what he read he tore up and threw into the fireplace, where quite a mound of litter had accumulated.

Occasionally some sound outside would interrupt his proceedings, and so nervous did he become at these fancied footsteps and noises that he at last seated himself with his back to the sun and his face fronting the door.

Hardly had he adjusted himself in this new position than a knock at the door really came, and controlling himself with an effort, he said:

"Come in!"

The door opened, and the landlady entered—a middle-aged woman, who wore spectacles, and whose careful gait and searching look showed that, even with the help of glasses, her sight was not of the best. She held an orange-hued envelope in her hand.

"A telegram, sir," she said, "for you. It's reply paid, and the messenger is waiting."

The young man took the envelope, tore it open, and spread out the tissue sheet. It contained the pencilled lines:

"Expected you yesterday. Surprised at delay. First practice match next Saturday. Wire when arrive.—EDGAR WILSON."

On the enclosed sheet the man rapidly pencilled his answer:

"Wilson, secretary Blue Crusaders, Moor Field Ground, Browton, Lincs.—Apologise for delay. Arrive to-night.—GREEN."

This he handed to the landlady.

"Thank you, Mr. Green," said the kindly woman, giving him an odd, questioning look. "And now there is Miss Weston to see you downstairs. She says you promised to see her to say good-bye last night. Poor soul! She's been crying her eyes out. I know you've been busy, sir, packing up and all that, but can't you say a kind word to her? Then, if you're going by the 5.15, you'll have to make haste. And my daughter Polly would like to say good-bye to you. The boys of the Newcastle club have been inquiring about you, but I told them that you were out, and that I did not know when you would be back, or by what train you would be leaving Newcastle, sir, just as you told me to."

"That's right, Mrs. Bryce," said Dick Green, for the young man was none other than the famous International centre-forward, whose transfer from Newcastle to the Blue Crusaders for a sum of £800 had been one of the sensations of the close season. "I really don't know what train I'm going to catch, and that's a fact. I've wired to the Crusaders' secretary just to keep him quiet. My luggage will be fetched, sent on to Newcastle, and cloak-roomed there. I have to go to the hospital to see how a poor friend of mine is getting along. Then I've a round of calls to make. I've got all my work cut out. But I'll be back again to say good-bye before I go."

"And what shall I say to Miss Weston, sir?"

"Say? Oh, say I'll be round presently to see her, that I'm awfully busy just now, and that if she were

to come up just now she'd only hinder me. Say something nice to her, Mrs. Bryce."

The landlady gave her lodger another searching look, shook her head, and felt her way gingerly downstairs.

"I don't know what's come over Dick Green," she murmured. "He's always so open, frank, and free, and these last two days so close; never in the house, though they are his last days here; shunning my daughter and poor Lucy Weston, who is so fond of him, and refusing to see any of his football chums. It's funny, to say the least of it. But there, it's no business of mine, and perhaps when he's got all his papers straight he'll be himself again. He has been busying himself about his papers, I must say."

She handed the waiting telegraph messenger the reply to the telegram, and faithfully repeated his message to the pretty eighteen-year-old girl who waited in the parlour.

Lucy Weston shed tears.

"I—I don't think he cares for me any more," she sobbed. "He's going away, and he won't see me!"

"I'm sure he will, dearie!" cried the landlady heartily. "Dick Green is the sweetest, most generous lad I've met. He's worried over something, that's all. There, don't cry, dearie. You go along home, and be prepared to give him a bright smile of welcome when he does come to see you. Don't send him away unhappy."

The girl dried her eyes, forced herself to smile, thanked Mrs. Bryce, and left the house.

A minute later, and the porter called with a truck for the luggage. He struggled with it downstairs by himself, the stalwart footballer making no attempt to assist him. A few minutes after his departure Green finished his docketing, and placing the various envelopes in his kit-bag, locked it, and then, going quietly downstairs, slipped through the front door without making a sound, leaving it on the jar.

Mrs. Bryce and her daughter were making tea in the kitchen, and he didn't wish them to hear. Once in the street he set off at a rapid pace for the river, and taking his ticket, journeyed by the first up-river ferry-boat bound for Newcastle. Despite the heat, he chose to go below and hide himself in a corner of the cabin, where he devoted his attention to the perusal of an afternoon paper.

Carefully he scanned every column until at last, with a murmur of satisfaction, he sought out a small paragraph, whose words he eagerly devoured.

#### "THE SANDHILL TRAGEDY."

"There is no improvement in the condition of the unknown man who was found with his head badly battered on Sandhill two nights ago. He lies in the infirmary in a critical condition, and the police are completely baffled for want of a clue. His name is believed to be Edwin Boyd, though he has not been fully identified as yet. He is a man of fine physique. The case is exciting intense interest in Newcastle."

A smile curved the lips of the reader as he grimly folded the paper and put it into his pocket.

Arrived at Newcastle he made his way to the quay, and up into the town, where he directed his steps at once to the infirmary. Entering the hall, he inquired for Dr. Smart, and a moment later saw the eminent house-surgeon coming towards him.

Dr. Smart, as he recognised the visitor, held out his hand.



"It's good of you to take so much trouble, Green," he said, "especially as I see you are bound for Brownton this evening. There is no improvement in the condition of the patient. We sent the name of Edwin Boyd to the Press as you suggested, but there have been no inquiries. Perhaps you would like to see him before you go?"

"Yes," said the footballer shortly.

"Very well, then. I must ask you to be very quiet. Follow me."

The doctor led the way up the stairs and into a long ward, where nurses were moving about on tip-toe, and making scarcely a sound. The rustle of the garments was in fact all that could be heard. The atmosphere was oppressive and depressing in the extreme. It was here where all the critical cases were taken. In short, it was the accident ward.

Dr. Smart led the way to the side of a bed on which a man lay whose face was the hue of death—at least, what little of it was visible. Bandages covered the head for the most part. The sufferer's eyes were open, the lips blue. It was obviously a desperate case.

"We could not perform the operation. He was not strong enough to stand the strain," whispered the doctor.

"Is there any hope for him at all?" asked the footballer.

"None, I am afraid. If there is, we shall save him, depend upon that. But if we can save his life, poor fellow, I'm afraid his brain will be permanently impaired—he was dreadfully injured. It is good of you to take so much trouble over a stranger, Green."

"Not at all, sir," was the whispered reply. "If you can operate, when, think you, will you do so?" the footballer added.

"To-morrow, if possible. The sooner the better."

"You know my address—the Blue Crusaders' Ground, Brownton?"

"Yes."

"Well, I shall be glad if you will let me know how he progresses," said Dick Green. "You see, I found him lying in the street, and I had him brought here, and I feel an interest in him."

"Naturally," whispered the doctor, as he led the way out of the ward again. "You are a good fellow, Green. I'll never say another bad word against a professional footballer as long as I live. When do you leave Newcastle?"

"I don't quite know," answered the famous International. "Some time this evening."

"Well, good-bye, and may good luck attend you with your new club, Green."

"Thank you," said the footballer. "Good-bye, doctor!" They shook hands, but the doctor's was by far the staunchest handclasp of the two. "You won't fail to let me know how the patient gets on, will you? You'll excuse me now. I've a hundred and one things to do before I leave Newcastle."

He turned away with that, and went down into the hall. As he passed at a quick walk out of the building he noticed a man standing on the pavement, with his eyes intently fixed on the infirmary door. The man had been loitering outside for an hour or more, and he had been there when Dick Green arrived, though he then had his back turned towards the footballer.

Now, as they met face to face, the man staggered back with a cry of fear, clasped his hands to his head, and turned deathly pale.

"No, no, it can't be!" he muttered. "I left him

lying battered and bleeding on the stones of Sandhill. I must be going mad—going mad!"

He stared at the young footballer with bulging eyes. Dick Green, who had noticed the man, also turned pale, and was evidently distressed at the encounter, though he mastered his emotion with an effort. He brushed past the waiting man, taking no notice of him, and, after a last glance into Green's face, the man turned and staggered away as if he were drunk, rapidly vanishing, with a groan, round the corner of the street.

Dick Green, the famous International, did not now retrace his steps to Byker to say good-bye to his friends as he had promised. Instead, he drew his watch from his pocket and glanced at the dial. It was a quarter to four. He hailed a cab, and was driven rapidly to the station. Here he found his luggage waiting for him in charge of the cloak-room attendant, as he had arranged.

He gave the porter sixpence.

"Quick!" he cried. "Get that stuff aboard the Brownton train, and look sharp about it!"

"The 5.15's a better train, sir," said the porter.

"Never mind. I'm going by the four o'clock. You understand?"

"You have a long wait at Hillingford, sir," ventured the porter again.

"Hang it! I don't care if I wait all night. That's my business. Get the luggage aboard!"

The porter made no further remark, but with a shake of his head set about his task, leaving Green to settle with the cloak-room man.

"Dick Green was the idol of the crowd at St. James's Park," muttered the porter, as he saw the luggage stowed away. "Well, if he's always been as surly as that I'm surprised at it, that's all. But there's no knowing where hero worship will end in football."

As soon as possible the footballer took his place in the corner of a third-class compartment, and as the train steamed out of the station he breathed a sigh of relief. Not one good-bye had been said, and Lucy Weston was left to weep her pretty eyes out for all he cared, and Green's comrades of Newcastle United, his late club, when they went to the station to see their chum off by the 5.15, found that he had already departed.

They had to get over their amazement as best they might, and the footballer, en route for Brownton to join the Blue Crusaders, began to study the letters and documents he had chosen to save, and to run through a roll of banknotes which he had drawn out that morning, when he had finally closed his account with the Newcastle Bank.

These represented upwards of £250, and the footballer smiled.

"It was just as well to bring it with me," he muttered. "I don't know when I may want it."

**Hillingford Junction—Tom Silward—Three Cheers for the Blue Crusaders—The Fight—Silward as Good as His Word.**

**D**ICK GREEN pursued his journey as far as Hillingford Junction, where he had to alight and wait for the train from Manchester to Brownton. He discovered that he had an hour and a quarter to wait, and none too well pleased at the prospect, he filled up his time by partaking of some food in the refreshment-room and walking up and down the platform afterwards, smoking a

pipe. Trains arrived and departed at frequent intervals, passengers came and went in large numbers, and presently the footballer caught sight of a young man seated on a pile of luggage consisting of leather-bound trunks, hat-boxes, and dressing-cases of the best make—a young man who seemed keenly interested in the pages of a football journal.

"Another follower of the great winter game," thought Green, as he sauntered closer to get a good look at the stranger.

He had come from the other side of the station, and the footballer remembered having seen this luggage brought over a short while before. The famous International passed behind the man, and as he passed he stooped down to read the directions on the luggage labels. His eyes brightened into an expression of the keenest interest. This man, too, was bound for Browton.

Green passed in front of him now, to get a closer look at his face. It was a fine face, almost boyish in expression, with keen, blue eyes and a smiling mouth. His hair was fair, his chest deep, and his shoulders broad, his height about five feet ten inches. One look at his aristocratic and refined features told Green that he was no professional footballer, and losing all interest in him thenceforward, he continued his way along the platform, relighting his pipe as he went.

He had reached the refreshment-room when suddenly a shout of laughter resounded on the air. It was followed by someone shouting out in a loud voice:

"Three cheers for the Blue Crusaders! Now then, all together, boys! One, two, three! Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!"

The cheers were given with that depth of lung which denotes fine physical condition, and the echoing cry rang through the station roof, causing the man who had been reading the football journal to raise his head.

"That's curious!" he muttered. "I was just reading all about the club, and here are some fellows cheering its name. I wonder who they are, and whether they are going to Browton?"

He rose from the trunk on which he had been seated, and walked briskly towards the refreshment-room. When he reached the door and peeped in, he saw three lads seated at the table, laughing and talking, whilst Dick Green, whom he had already noticed on the platform was standing near them, eyeing them with a questioning glance.

There was no mistaking the "cut of the jib" with these lads. Thomas Silward had been too closely connected with footballers and football not to recognise them as professional players instantly, and, actuated by a fellow-feeling, he entered the refreshment-room without delay.

Meanwhile, Dick Green had taken it upon himself to speak.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but did I hear you mention the Blue Crusaders just now?"

One of the three lads looked up, frowning.

"We shouted loud enough," he said, not too pleased at Green's intrusion. "You must be deaf if you didn't."

"All right; you needn't get shirty," said Green, bridling up. "I suppose you're not too big a man to be spoken to, are you? I wanted to know because it struck me that you might be players just signed

FOOTBALL LIBRARY.—No. 14.

on, and going to join the club; in which case you might go along to Browton together, that's all."

Green's calm manner had its effect.

"Who are you?" asked the lad who had spoken before. "And why should we go along to Browton with you?"

"I'm going to join the club. My name's Green," said the International shortly.

The three professionals exchanged quick and meaningful glances.

"What, Green who's joining the Crusaders from Newcastle United?" asked the footballer again.

"Yes."

Another quick glance was exchanged. The manner of the three lads changed now. They thawed perceptibly, and their admiration was expressed in the glances they shot at the International.

"My name's Hepworth," the young professional said now. "I'm glad to meet you, Mr. Green. My friends are Jamieson and Tudmore. Jamieson and myself are from Gainsborough Trinity, and Tudmore is from Batley Bridge. He's a junior, but a mighty good lad, you can take it from me. He won't be the worst of the Crusaders' captures this season."

"That's all right," said Dick Green easily. "Now we know each other, and can converse without fear or favour. You'll have a drink, you chaps, won't you?"

"I'll take ginger-beer," said Tudmore.

"Mine's a lemonade," put in Jamieson.

"And I'll take a lemonade, too," added Hepworth.

"Miss," called Dick Green across the bar, "two small lemonades, a ginger-beer, and a brandy-and-soda!"

As they heard the order the three young professionals stared. At the mention of the brandy-and-soda they exchanged quick, meaningful glances.

"Not gone into strict training yet, perhaps," whispered Hepworth across to his chums.

The drinks were handed round, the players had mutually wished each other good health in the conventional fashion, when Thomas Silward, who had been standing just inside the door, and on whom no syllable of the conversation had been lost, entered and confronted the group with a congenial smile upon his face.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," he said in a deep, rich voice such as a trained singer would produce, "but I heard you talking of football just now, and I can't hear the name mentioned without a thrill of joy running through my veins. It seems to set me afire. I am going to Browton, the same as yourselves, but I am not going there to take part in the game—more's the pity. I am going there to work. Still, there is no reason why we should not know each other, and later on there may be a chance of me getting a game or two up at Moor Field."

Dick Green turned and stared at the speaker in solid amazement. The three young pros. exchanged grins. Silward was faultlessly dressed. There was a touch of vanity displayed in his flowing, richly-coloured tie, the fancy shirt he wore, his boots, which were ornamented with numerous holes bored in the leather so as to form a pattern, and in the white slip which edged the opening in his waistcoat.

"Oh, yes, of course!" grinned Hepworth. "You'd like to get a game at Moor Field, no doubt. But what would the management say? How about the crowd when you gave the show away? You'd need

(Continued on page iii, of Cover.)

police protection if you played football at Moor Field, governor."

Thomas Silward fixed his eyes on the speaker with injured dignity shooting in their depths.

"No, believe me, Hepworth," he said—he had got the names "pat" on hearing the lad introduce himself to Green, the International—"I have played football in the best company in the land. I have played in some of the finest games in the history of sport. To me belongs the honour of executing the finest piece of individual play ever seen in an International game, and I well remember that after the match against Scotland at Ibrox Park, on April 14th, 1909, that Lord Kinnaird said to me—"

He got no further, for the three youngsters burst into a roar of laughter which awakened the echoes of the refreshment-room, shook the glasses behind the bar until they rattled again, and went echoing outside like miniature thunder. Green joined in the laughter as if it had been the greatest joke he had ever heard in his life. Meanwhile, Thomas Silward stood regarding them seriously, gravely, with his fingers busy with his upper lip, upon which the slightest suspicion of down was showing, as fair as his fair hair.

"Do you mean to imply that you disbelieve my statement?" he asked.

"Oh, no," said Hepworth, with a grin. "Nothing of the sort. We believe you, sonny. Truth is written on your face."

A happy inspiration came to Thomas Silward. He was an easy-going man, gifted with the best of tempers.

"Of course, I am a stranger to you, and your doubt is natural," he said, "but Green here can substantiate my statement. He was playing for Scotland in the same match, though I think that even he will admit that I was by far the best forward on the field."

Green started, stared, turned red, and then became pale and nervous.

"I have no recollection of you at all," he said.

The footballers, who were listening eagerly, uttered a grunt of satisfaction. They would have looked small indeed if the great Green had declared Silward to be telling the truth.

Silward, however, flushed hotly.

"Are you playing a joke with me?" he asked.

"No," said Green shortly. "I'm not one to joke. I simply say you are a cheat, a braggart, and an impostor. You never played International football in your life."

Silward made an exclamation of anger, bit his lip until the blood came, and made half a step forward.

"No one asked this gentleman to put his spoke in," Green went on, turning to the three footballers who had signed on for the Blue Crusaders, "and if he gets candidly criticised, that's his look-out. One gets tired of wasting time with all the fools one meets. I've won fifteen International caps, and a man who's done that gets wearied by the side issues of the game."

"Fifteen International caps, did you say?" asked Silward, with his eyes flashing.

"Yes."

"How do you compose them?"

The International coloured, and hesitated a moment, as if thinking before replying.

"Seven against England, four against Wales, and four against Ireland," he said.

"I thought it was sixteen," said Silward, eyeing him fixedly—"seven against England, five against Wales, and four against Ireland. Of course, you should know best, since you wore them; but you put all the International records wrong, that's all."

"What do you know about International records?" sneered Green; while the listening trio drank in every word of the duel with relish.

"The last time I was at the Association's headquarters," said Silward, who had regained his temper, and was pulling at the threads of his moustache again, "was when Mr. F. J. Wall sent for me to ask my advice and opinion on the admission of professional clubs among the junior amateur associations of London, and while I was there—"

"Well, when you were at the Association offices, what then?" sneered Green.

"Why, I looked up the Internationals. I was interested, and I paid special attention to your case, because I always admired your play. Sixteen caps it is, Green. You are too modest. And, now I look at you, I find the books differ in some particulars about you, and the photograph they have of you isn't really a good one. The scar on your forehead shows too plainly, and the portrait gives you a squarer, more determined angle to the jaw, and the ears are not so prominent."

Dick Green stepped forward with an angry cry.

"Curse you for an impertinent hound!" he cried, striking out savagely at Silward.

The latter shifted his feet cleverly, and was instantly out of harm's way.

"Have a care," he said quietly. "I can use my fists as well as play football. When I had the gloves on with Jim Jeffries he confessed he didn't know how to get at me. The only advantage he had over me was in weight. I was just as clever and as tricky as the champion, as you'll find to your cost, Green, if you lay hands on me."

But Green's blood was up. Besides, if ever there was a braggart, Silward, with his bombastic and egotistical allusions to himself, seemed to be one.

Silward backed to the door.

"We can't make a scene in the refreshment-room," he said. "Come outside."

Green and the others took this for an indication of fear, but when Silward had drawn them to a

(Continued on page iv. of Cover.)

## MERRY MUSIC SONG & STORY



4/6

WITH ORDER

Buy a "Masterphone" and turn the dull Winter Nights into hours of Real Happiness. The "Masterphone" has walnut cabinet, flower horn, reliable motor, and concert sound box. 42/- with six Records for Cash; or with three Records on Easy Terms. Send 4/6 now and 42/- Machine is sent you, pay a further sum on delivery, and 6/- monthly.

Records on Easy Terms.

**Ask for Lists.**

**MASTERS,**

**97, Hope Stores, RYE.**



deserted part of the platform, where the shadows hung heavily, he faced round.

"Now," he said, with a tightening of the lips. "If you are ready, Green, let us begin."

For the first time doubt assailed the man from Newcastle, but with his future comrades—Hepworth and the others—looking on, and himself really desiring to lay hands on Silward, whom he cordially disliked, he threw off his coat and rushed in to attack.

Green was a strong lad, clever with his fists, and possessed with a fair amount of brute courage, but when he received a staggering blow above the region of the heart, another on the throat, and a third on the side of the head, and a fourth plump on the mark, which hit him to the ground, even he wished he had not begun.

Tudmore helped the prostrate Green to his feet. "He's a bit too quick for you," he said encouragingly. "Go at it more slowly; keep your guard high, and let him do the attacking, Green."

Green was breathing heavily. The brandy-and-soda he had just partaken of was doing him no good. He was torn with a fierce anger which undermined his judgment, and, disregarding Tudmore's friendly advice, he weaved in again. This time he managed to land a stunning blow flush on Silward's cheek, which drew blood and sent him back a step or two. But Silward countered him lightly, and, warmed up by the hit, came at him, dodging and feinting with a rapidity and style that held the onlookers spell-bound.

Green's advantage was short-lived. He was hit right and left as Silward pleased. One eye was quickly closed, and his face began to swell and puff up, and blood came gushing from his mouth, and just as a porter arrived, shouting, with a blow which resounded dully beneath the station roof, Silward knocked his opponent off his feet for the second time. He lay quite still where he had fallen.

Silward, who had not troubled to remove his coat, turned to the porter, who was uttering threats of vengeance and of the police.

"It's all right," he said, breathing a trifle heavily. "I had a difference with that gentleman, and we've settled it. There's half-a-crown, porter. Get my luggage aboard the Browton train, and don't say anything about this. You don't want to draw a crowd."

The porter was mollified. After all, the mischief was done, the fight was over, and the half-a-crown was very comforting.

Five minutes later, when the Browton train steamed in, the International was able to walk all right, though he presented a pitiful spectacle.

Silward himself led him to a vacant third-class compartment, into which the footballers sprang.

"If you don't mind," said Silward, "as soon as I've seen my luggage safe I'll join you."

Which he did, and the five continued their journey to Browton together.

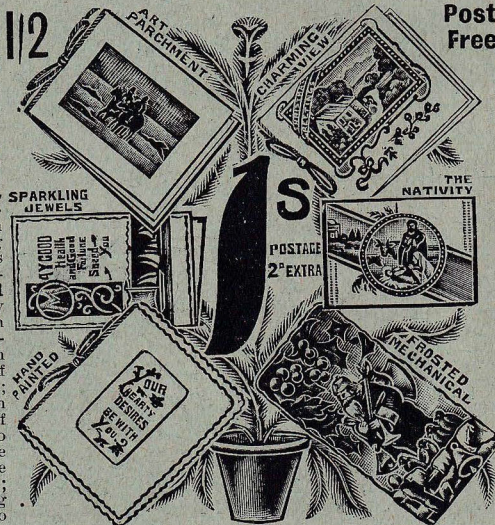
(Another fine long instalment next Thursday. Are you reading "Peter Jackson of Manchester," the great new bozina story, now appearing in our Saturday companion, "The Boys' Realm"?)

# XMAS CARDS

Simply write very plainly on a piece of paper the words "No. 213 Big Value Xmas Parcel," and your name and full postal address, and post it, with a Postal Order for 1/2, or Fifteen Penny Stamps, and the Parcel will be sent by return post free. If not doubly satisfied, return the lot, and we will refund cash in full. Nothing can be fairer than this.

# FREE GIFTS

**PAIN BROTHERS'** Annual "Big Value" (Wholesale System) Xmas Parcel of Xmas Cards is now ready. "Bigger Value" than ever, and even prettier designs. Send 1/- (and 2d. for postage) to-day for all the following:—No less than **Twelve Booklet-shaped Xmas Cards**, all with **Art Parchment Covers and Silk Cord or Ribbon Bows**. Some value as much as 4d. each retail, comprising these choice subjects: A series of three with beautiful **Photographic and Coloured Mounted Views** of lovely scenery, etc. (Xmas Cards with Views are very popular); **Hand-painted Scroll**, etc., design in Gold and Colours; a series of three Popular Floral Designs; "For Auld Lang Syne," Card with quaint figure; Golden Sprays of Ivy, Holly, etc., etc. We will also send **Free** to all buyers of the "Big Value" Parcel a choice **Folding Card of the Nativity**; a **Richly Jewelled Folding Card of Holly or Ships**, etc.; also a beautiful **Mechanical Card** of



Post Free

Children, Animals, or Motor-car, opening out with surprising effect; also another **Frosted Mechanical Tableau Xmas Card of Father Xmas, Birds, Bells, Holly**, etc., all in natural colours, cleverly constructed to open and stand up on table, mantle, etc.; a pretty **Folding Card of Winter Scene, Robin, Holly**, etc.; and yet still more, for we will send free **Eight more Superb Booklet-shaped Xmas Cards**, all tied with dainty Silk Cord or Ribbon, and all are of the popular "Art Greeting" Style, in "Art Tints," **Gold-Mounted**, etc., all guaranteed of equal value to those before-described. At least twenty of the cards are value from 2d. to 4d. each retail. "Big Value" indeed—25 Cards and Presents for 1/- and 2d. for postage. 25 Superior **Envelopes**, assorted sizes to fit Cards, 3d., post free. **FREE!** Illustrated Catalogue of thousands of other "Big Value" Bargains in **Novelties, Cards, and Presents** for young and old, sent gratis and post free to any address in the world.

**PAIN BROTHERS,**  
Dept. 213,  
**The "Presents House,"**  
Hastings (Eng.).

Printed and published weekly by the Proprietors at 23, Bouverie Street, London, England. Subscription, 4s. 4d. per annum. Applications for Advertisement space should be addressed to the Manager, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, E.C. Communications for the Editor should be addressed—"The Editor, THE BOYS' REALM FOOTBALL LIBRARY, 23, Bouverie Street, London, E.C." Agents for Australia: Gordon & Gotch, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, and Wellington, N.Z. South Africa: The Central News Agency, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and branches. Saturday, December 18th, 1909.