

HEALTHY STORIES OF FOOTBALL AND ADVENTURE!

The Boys' Realm 1d

Football Series

A BRIGHT AND UP-TO-DATE PAPER FOR ALL BRITISH BOYS AND YOUNG MEN.

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EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY.

[SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH, 1906.

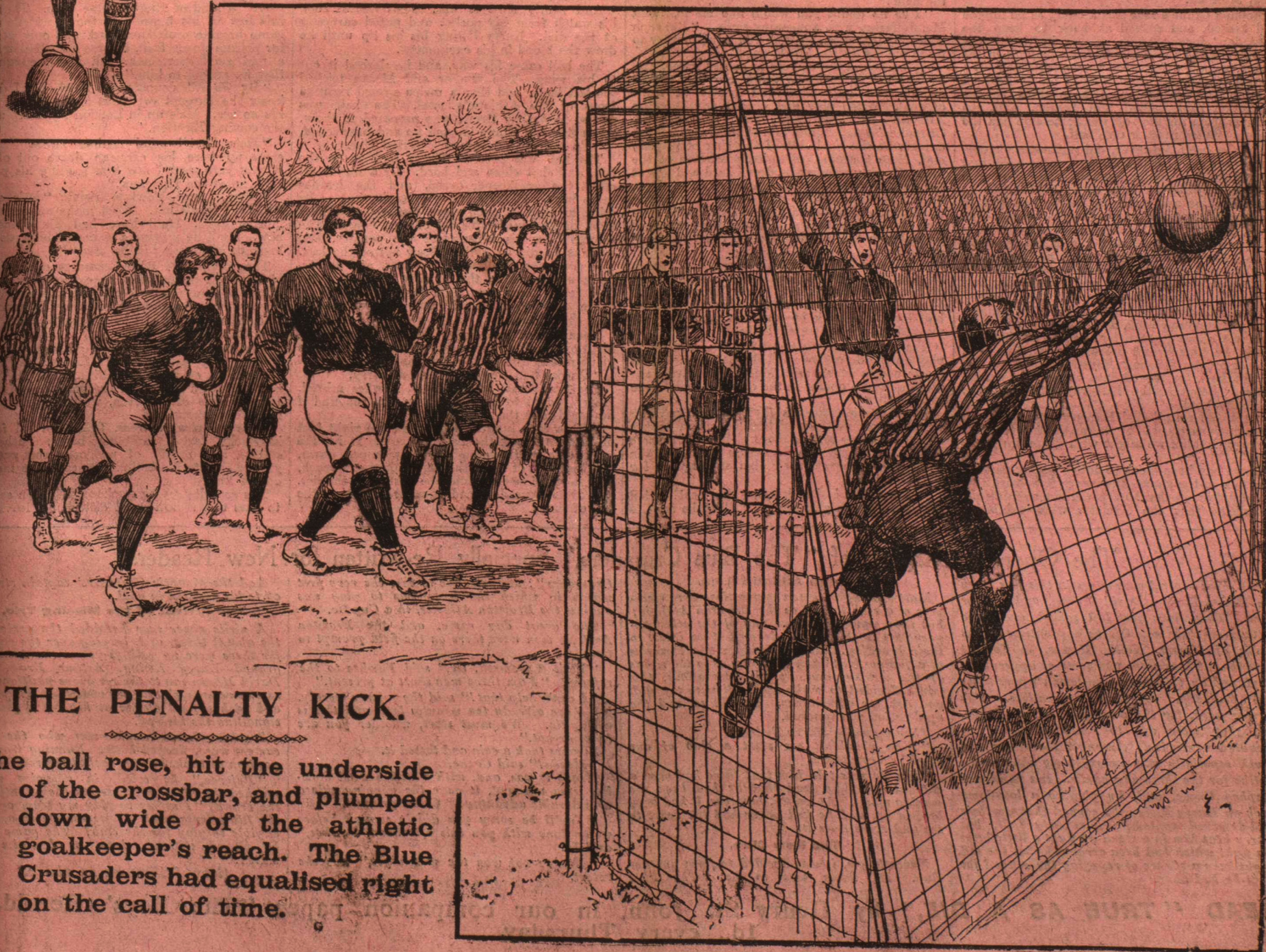
THIS FINE STORY IS NOW STARTING.

YOU SHOULD READ IT!

The = Blue = Crusaders.

Arthur S. Hardy's Enthralling New Football Serial.

Although this story is in the main a work of fiction, many of the chief incidents are founded on actual fact. Names of places and characters have been altered for reasons that are obvious; but the whole story has been constructed upon the history of one of the most famous of present-day football clubs, whose name is inscribed among the immortals who have won the English Cup. Those who are familiar with the histories of our famous League Clubs in South and North are quite aware of the fact that most of them have risen from very small beginnings. In this story Mr. A. S. Hardy will tell, in his most graphic manner, how a club founded by a few lads in a most modest way rose, in time, to be one of the most famous in the Kingdom, winning ultimately both the Football Association Cup and the Championship of the League.—YOUR EDITOR.



THE PENALTY KICK.

The ball rose, hit the underside of the crossbar, and plumped down wide of the athletic goalkeeper's reach. The Blue Crusaders had equalised right on the call of time.

What was to be done? Leave Millfield? Leave his home, all his friends, his football club, all the scenes he had ever known? There was nothing else for it, and sadly enough he made up his mind to the inevitable. But on Thursday morning came a gleam of light. The post brought a letter from Mr. Ashburn, the manager of the Albion Football Club. It contained simply a request that Dick would call at the manager's house that evening. Dick read and wondered; and his heart beat with hope. "What can it mean, Dick?" said his mother. "You do not know Mr. Ashburn?"

"No, mother. He came to see our match last Saturday. I don't know what he can want with me. But I know he's a kind-hearted man, and he may have heard somehow that I am out of work, and may mean to give me a job at the football ground."

And Dick presented himself at the house of Mr. Ashburn, little dreaming of what awaited him. He was shown into the dining-room, where Mr. Ashburn was seated with a man whom Dick recognised at once as Hallam, captain and centre-forward of the Albion.

"Glad to see you, Melton," said Mr. Ashburn, shaking him cordially by the hand. "You've seen Mr. Hallam before. We have been talking about you. Mr. Hallam quite agrees with my opinion, that you would make a valuable recruit for the team. Are you willing to join the Albion and play for Millfield?" Dick almost staggered. He could hardly believe his ears.

"Play for Millfield!" he said faintly.

"Yes, my boy," said the manager, with a smile. "I take it you are willing?"

"Oh, sir!"

Poor Dick could say no more. Astonishment and delight rendered him dumb. But his looks were eloquent. Mr. Ashburn turned to Hallam, with a smile of satisfaction.

"You'll take him in hand, then, Hallam, and the trainer will put him through his paces. Can you join at once, Melton? You are employed in a mill, I believe."

"I have left the mill, sir," said Dick, recovering himself a little.

"Ah, will you tell me why?"

"I was discharged on Monday, sir, without character," said Dick bravely. "Mr. Fenwick was too angry to listen to me. His nephew sacked me, when he was intoxicated, and I fended myself. I swear that that is the truth. Perhaps I lost my temper and hit him harder than I should have done. But Mr. Fenwick—"

"I've no doubt about it," broke in Hallam. "Young Fenwick is the biggest backguard in Millfield, and a drunken brute into the bargain."

Mr. Ashburn pursed his lips.

"Well, well, we shall see. Meanwhile, you may come on trial, Melton; but your salary will commence at once."

Dick stammered out incoherent thanks. When he left the manager's house he hardly knew whether he was standing upon his head or his heels, so great was his amazement and joy. He went home to acquaint his mother with the good news, and the poor widow received it with expressions of thankfulness.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.
The New Recruit.

It did not take Mr. Ashburn long to make up his mind about his new recruit. Both Hallam and the trainer concurred in the manager's opinion of Dick, who, indeed, proved his very hardest to give satisfaction. He had never been afraid of work, and when that work was playing the game he loved, he naturally put his heart into it. After his first few days' practice at the Albion ground, Mr. Ashburn was not only satisfied, but was blessing the good fortune in securing such a recruit.

He fully believed Dick's account of the reason why he had been discharged from the mill, when Cecil Fenwick heard that the boy he had taken on by Mr. Ashburn, his nephew knew no bounds. He called upon the manager and did his best to injure Dick, but fortunately for himself, his spite was so evident that the keen-eyed manager of the Albion looked through him, and read his motives easily enough. His answer, therefore, was short and sharp, and Cecil left the house disappointed and aged.

"But I will settle him yet!" he muttered.

Dick, meanwhile, had almost forgotten his nephew's existence, in the happiness of his new job. At first he could hardly believe in his luck. The Albion men generally gave him a cordial reception. He worked hard, and improved his form rapidly, and had the satisfaction of seeing that he fulfilled his employer's expectations.

"You'll do, Melton," Mr. Ashburn said to him one day. "I shall play you in a reserve match on Saturday, as a final test. Saturday you will play inside-right in the first team, and Clarke will go into the reserves."

Dick felt sorry for Clarke; but, of course, it was the manager's duty to play the best man available, and Dick's to obey orders.

Cecil Fenwick had kept himself informed of Dick's progress. This was not difficult, as he saw most of the Albion men, his uncle having interest in the club. He came to see the reserve match. He could hardly believe that Dick would go into the Albion first team. If he did, Cecil had all unconsciously done him good turn in driving him from the mill. He watched the game with a kind of savage interest.

The Albion first team was away, and the reserves were playing a visiting team. Dick was at inside right, and his performance there was splendid. New as he was to first-class foot-

ball, it was clear that he was the pick of the bunch, and he did magnificent work for his side. The home team won easily, with three goals to nil, and of the three, one was taken by Dick, and a second scored from a pass by him. He was loudly cheered, but there was one savagely scowling face in the crowd. It was Cecil Fenwick's.

Fenwick strode away from the ground still scowling. He knew that nothing now could stop the young footballer's career; nothing could prevent his winning a great name in Millfield. Unless—Yes, there was one means that could be used.

"He is to displace Clarke in the first team, so they say," muttered Cecil. "Well, I'll see what I can make of Clarke. Surely it will be easy to induce him—"

He did not finish the reflection, but his face cleared at the prospect of yet ruining the chances of the boy he hated. Clarke, as a matter of fact, did not take his displacement kindly. Like many strictly mediocre footballers, he had a great opinion of his own powers, and he was inclined to be sullen and snappish when he received the manager's notification. But Dick was very careful to show no trace of "side" or uppishness. His frankness and good-nature somewhat mollified the displaced forward.

During the week, Cecil Fenwick found an opportunity of speaking to Clarke. He commenced with a sneer at the new recruit, and condemned the manager's folly, in which Clarke quite agreed with him. Then he approached more delicate ground.

"I take it you have no special liking for that puppy, Clarke?" he remarked.

"I can't be expected to, can I?"

"Certainly not. You wouldn't be sorry to shove him out of the team?"

"I can't say I should; but what on earth are you getting at?" asked the other, mystified.

"Well, look here. I don't like him any more than you do. It's easy enough for a chap to give another a kick in a practice match, and you have plenty of opportunities. Make it impossible for young Melton to play any more this season, and I'll make it worth fifty pounds to you."

"You want me to foul a comrade in a friendly match?" said Clarke quietly—dangerously quietly.

But Cecil, in his eagerness, noticed nothing.

"You'll serve yourself and me, too; and fifty pounds is a big sum," he said.

"You'd like my answer now, I suppose?"

"Yes."

THE 4th CHAPTER.
A Dastardly Attempt.

DICK MELTON'S face was cheerful as he left the club ground after his usual practice on Friday afternoon, and turned his steps homeward. On the morrow he was to play in the Albion forward line against Manchester Rovers, who were coming to Millfield. The thought made his heart beat faster.

The early winter evening had closed in dark and foggy. The way to the cottage where he still lived was somewhat lonely, but no thought of danger crossed Dick's mind. He strode on cheerfully, thinking of the morrow and of his first League match, happy and a little excited in anticipation.

Patter, patter!

There came a rapid rush of footsteps from the fog. Three burly forms loomed up round him with startling suddenness.

"There he is!"

"Out 'im!"

Sticks were whirling in the air to crash down upon his head. Dick Melton was taken by surprise, but the great game had taught him presence of mind and instant decision. Even as the hooligans loomed up from the fog he made a swift backward spring, and the descending bludgeons swept the empty air.

But the ruffians, with muttered curses, rushed full at him. From the fog a voice Dick knew shouted to them:

"Look out! Don't let him get away!"

There was no chance for the young man to get away. The hooligans were upon him, and he faced them desperately, shouting for help, though with but little expectation of being answered.

Again, by swiftness and luck, he dodged the blows aimed at him, and, springing forward, drove his clenched fist into an evil, bristly face. The hooligan went down like a log, gasping hoarsely. A bludgeon, missing Dick's head, clumped on his shoulder. The next moment another blow would have stretched him on the earth, and placed him at the mercy of the hooligans, but from the fog came a shout and a rush of feet.

"Buck up, Albion!"

Three stalwart figures came springing upon the scene. The hooligans went down beneath heavy blows like slaughtered oxen, and were glad to remain upon the ground, without attempting to rise. For they recognised in their assailants members of Millfield Albion, and they had had enough.

boys, and luckily we heard Melton shout, and came up in time. Now, your little game was to cripple him and spoil his football form, wasn't it? Out with it!"

"No—yes!" stammered Fenwick.

"All right, you cur! Chaps, there's a pond just handy yonder. He wants a lesson badly, to cure him of his dirty tricks. Now, Fenwick, will you stand up to Melton, and fight like a man, or will you take a ducking?"

"That's right," said Dick grimly. "Take your choice, Fenwick, for, by James, you shall have one or the other!"

And the footballers chorused approval.

"Look here, I'll give you a five-pound note each—"

"The pond, chaps! Drag him along!" cried Clarke.

"No, no!" yelled Cecil, in dire terror of being ducked in the freezing water. "Spare me that. I'll fight that—fellow!"

"And that fellow will give you a hiding you've wanted for a long time," said Dick Melton quietly.

There was no help for it. Cecil's hooligans had already crawled away in the fog and made themselves scarce. He was alone with the justly-incensed footballers, and he had to stand up in a fair fight to the man he had injured.

Round them the footballers formed a ring. Cecil knew that he would receive fair play. After all, he was six years older than his opponent, and he knew something of boxing. He braced himself for the fight, determined to do his best to defeat the young footballer.

And so they faced each other and began. In the dim, grey, foggy night they fought, with savage spite on one side and grim determination on the other.

But pluck and good condition told. Cecil's way of life had not fitted him for any trial of strength. Twice he went down under crashing blows, and at the second he refused to rise again. Dick had hardly been touched.

"Let him go!" said Dick contemptuously.

"Clear out, you cur, and thank your stars you've got off so easily!"

And Cecil picked himself up and vanished into the night. The Albion lads escorted Dick as far as his home, and left him at his door. Cecil's last attempt had failed. On the morrow Dick Melton would play for Millfield—and win, too, he was resolved.

THE 5th CHAPTER.
The Manchester Match.

THE Albion men made no secret of that night's happenings, and all Millfield knew the next day of Cecil Fenwick's attempt to disable a home player before the match. It is probable that the young man's life would not have been safe if he had appeared that day in the streets of his native town. It was soon learned that he had quitted Millfield, and everyone heartily hoped that it was for good.

And shortly before the arrival of the Manchester team Mr. Fenwick came to the club ground. He came to see Dick. Somewhat to the amazement of the young footballer, the great mill-owner held out his hand in a frank way.

"I'm sorry I was misled in regard to you, Melton," he said. "My eyes have been opened lately, and last night's affair has made many things clear to me. My nephew has left Millfield, and I intend to adopt stern measures with him. Unless he changes completely he will never return, but I am giving him a chance in London. Meanwhile, I beg your pardon for having misjudged you. I will not ask you to return to the mill, because I can see that you have a splendid career before you as a footballer; but I may say that I shall watch your progress with interest, and hope to see you win fame and honour for our native town."

It was the amende honorable, and Dick was more than satisfied. Mr. Fenwick remained in the grand stand beside Manager Ashburn to see the great match.

The attempt upon Dick had given the match an interest even greater than usual in Millfield. The enclosures were crammed long before the time for the kick-off. When the players entered the field Dick Melton was greeted with a deafening cheer.

The day was somewhat foggy, but there was enough light for play. The teams lined up, both looking very fit. Manchester won the toss, and Hallam kicked off.

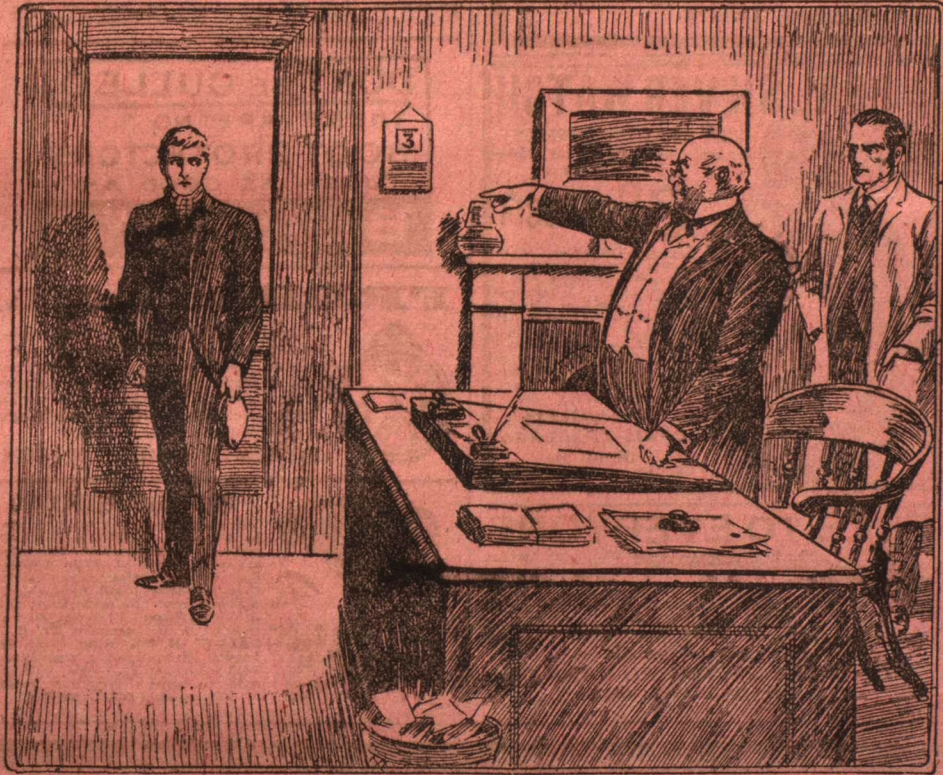
The Manchester men attacked gamely, but the struggle was soon in the visitors' half, and the Manchester citadel was besieged. There was a tussle right up to the goal, and the ball came suddenly out of a press of players, like a stone from a catapult, and whizzed in before the custodian knew what was going to happen.

"Goal!" roared the Millfielders; and another roar followed: "Bravo, Melton!"

Dick had taken the first goal for his side. After that the Manchester forwards made desperate attempts to get going, but with very indifferent success. But their defence was good, and no more goals were taken before half-time. The first half therefore ended with Millfield one up.

From the restart the game was lively and stoutly contested. Every man put his best foot foremost. Twice Dick sent in shots that made the enemy catch their breath. One hit the post and rebounded into play, and the other was saved by the goalkeeper by the skin of his teeth. Then the Manchester men, with a mighty effort, brought the play into the home half, and attacked the Millfield citadel. By strenuous play they overcame the defence, and scored a goal for Manchester.

There was now a quarter of an hour to play, and the game had been a gruelling one. Both sides showed signs of exhaustion. For some time the play was feeble, and the ball was knocked about in midfield. Then the Manchester men



"Upon reflection," said Mr. Fenwick, "I shall be satisfied with discharging you, but I warn you that any future employer whom you may refer to shall know your true character. Now go! Not another word!"

"All right. There it is."

The footballer's fist shot out, and Cecil went flying. He found himself sitting in the gutter.

"You—you ruffian!" he shouted.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Want any more?"

"N-no."

"Well, you'll get some more if you ever talk again like that to me, you cur! And now I'm going to tell Melton what you've said, and put him on his guard."

And Clarke did so, without delay. Dick listened with amazement; he had never dreamed that even Cecil Fenwick would descend so low as that. He grasped Clarke's hand.

"Thanks," he said simply. "You're a jolly good sort."

Cecil Fenwick picked himself up and went away in a towering rage. He had failed, and with most unpleasant consequences to himself. But the rancour in his heart was only intensified. It wanted now but two days to Dick's first League match, and Cecil swore inwardly that, in spite of Clarke's refusal, the young footballer should not be able to play. And so he set his wits to work, with what result we shall see.

Dick was amazed by the sight of his comrades.

"Thanks—thanks!" he cried. "You came just in the nick of time. But how came you here?"

"It was Clarke's idea," replied a Millfield half.

"Hallo! There he is; and what's he got with him?"

Clarke came out of the mist, dragging a form that yelled and struggled and pleaded.

"Cecil Fenwick!"

Clarke set the scoundrel upon his feet. Cecil looked extremely dishevelled. Clarke had not handled him gently. He looked round like a wild animal seeking a chance to escape, but the Albion lads were all round him.

"How dare you assault me?" he stammered.

"I had nothing to do with this affair. I was here by chance, and—"

"That's a lie!" said Dick quietly. "I heard you egging them on."

"I—"

"Shut up!" said Clarke. "After what you said to me yesterday, you reptile, I guessed you might try some game to spoil Melton's form for the Manchester match, and after Dick had left it struck me that this fog would give you a chance to do it. So I followed on with some of the

READ "TRUE AS A DIE," by Henry St. John, in our companion paper "The Boys' Herald." 1d. every Thursday.

DICK MELTON'S LUCK. (Continued from the previous page.)

made a determined effort, and swept down upon the home goal. The spectators held their breath. Were Millfield to be licked on their own ground? No! A home back skied the ball, and a Manchester half headed it forward again; but a Millfield head—it was Hallam's—popped up and sent it over the line. Then forward came the Albion in a rush there was no resisting. Like a vision the scene had changed, and the struggle was now transferred to the visitors' goal. The ball was at Dick's feet when a Manchester half charged him behind and sent him sprawling. "Penalty!" roared ten thousand voices. The referee's whistle was a shrilling one. Play was stopped, and Dick scrambled to his feet. A

penalty was awarded to Millfield, and Hallam looked anxiously at Dick. Dick nodded cheerily. The fall had been a bit of a shock, but he was quite fit. Amid a hush of eagerness he took the penalty kick. The goalkeeper, as he afterwards explained, was looking for a ball, and not a flash of lightning. Anyway, the ball was in the net, and the ten thousand voices roared applause. In the few minutes that remained to play Manchester had no chance to equalise. Phip went the whistle, and the players trooped off the field. Millfield had won a hard-fought game by 2 to 1, and well deserved their victory. And so we leave Dick Melton, winning fame for himself and honour for his native town as the crack player of Millfield Albion.

THE END.

(Two fine long, complete tales on Saturday next. One will be an enthralling story of Slapton School, and the other one of Mr. T. C. Bridges' clever warder stories.)

FOOTBALL NOTES. Notices and Challenges from Readers' Clubs Inserted Free of Charge.

[Readers should remember that these notices cannot appear until three weeks after they are received, owing to this paper going to press so long in advance of the date of publication.]

ARMADALE F. C. (average, 17) have open dates on and after February 3rd. Home or away.—Apply by letter to John Murray, 58, Crown Street, Glasgow.

AYLESBURY F. C. (13, medium) have a few open dates, all away—February 24th, April 14th, 28th, and several others.—H. Knight, 20, Winkfield Road, Wood Green, N.

ST. FRIDESWIDE'S 3rd (14, average) have open dates for March 10th, 24th, and 31st, given and required if possible.—Apply to 44, Benledi Street, Poplar, London, E. NORWOOD WANDERERS F. C. (15 weak) want Wednesday matches away. All dates open.—Apply to 63, Ladas Road, West Norwood, S. St. JOHN'S A. F. C. (average) wanted for the remainder of the season a radius of three miles of Fishponds, Bristol.

ARMADALE F. C. require players.—Apply by letter to John Murray, 58, Crown Street, Glasgow.

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BEFORE. BOYS! KEEP YOUR FEET WARM. London House, Mayfield, Sussex. January 17th, 1905. Gentlemen,—Please send me six pairs of your "Loofite" Medicated Socks, sizes as follows: 2 ladies' (4) and 4 gents' (8). It is now eight weeks since I tried your Medicated Socks, and am able to say with the greatest pleasure and thankfulness. The sharp rheumatic pains, which at times have been positively excruciating, have now completely left me. It seems like a new lease of life, and this I can only put down to the "Loofite" Medicated Sock. I cannot say you have exaggerated in any single instance what you claim for your sock. I enclose postal order for the 6 pairs of socks. Again thanking you, I remain, yours truly, (Signed) MARCHAND KNIGHT. Price 6d. a PAIR. This is the distressing cry now the cold, wet weather is with us. Tender and Inflamed Feet, Corns, and Rheumatic Pains in the joints soon unnerve and cripple an otherwise healthy person. BUT WHY SUFFER? When "LOOFITE" MEDICATED SOCK, which is IMPREGNATED with BORACIC ACID, PINE OIL, &c. kills the pain, heals the Tender and Inflamed Foot, absorbs the shock when walking or running, and keeps the feet at an even temperature; while the combination of the Boracic Acid, Pine Oil, &c., drawn by the warmth of the feet into the system CURES RHEUMATISM and SCIATIC PAINS. Tender, Offensive, and Inflamed Feet, Corns, Chilblains, Rheumatism, and Sciatica are prevented and cured by wearing the "Loofite" Medicated Sock. Get a pair at once and enjoy a good walk. It will only cost you 6d. When ordering say what size boot or shoe worn (whether ladies' or gents'), and send postal order 6d., and a penny for postage (Foreign and Colonial orders 1s. extra), to MORTON'S LONDON TOILET STORES (Dept. H), 159, Rye Lane, London, S.E. Kirkdale, 36, Chatsworth Rd., West Dulwich, February 19th, 1905. Dear Sirs,—Would you be good enough to forward me another pair of "Loofite" Socks, size 6? I am so delighted with them, and find them very beneficial and stimulating for the feet. I always wear very thin shoes, and, walking a great deal, used often to get my feet damp, and, being very susceptible to colds, with disastrous results. Since wearing the "Loofite" Medicated Loofah Sock I find, in damp weather, myself quite free from colds; also my feet do not ache when walking long distances. I therefore feel very grateful to the inventor, and hope to recommend them on every possible occasion. Believe me to be, yours faithfully, (Signed) MRS. L. SCOTT. Price 6d. a PAIR.

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS WEEK'S "BOYS' FRIEND" ?