

FIRST SPECIAL FOOTBALL NUMBER

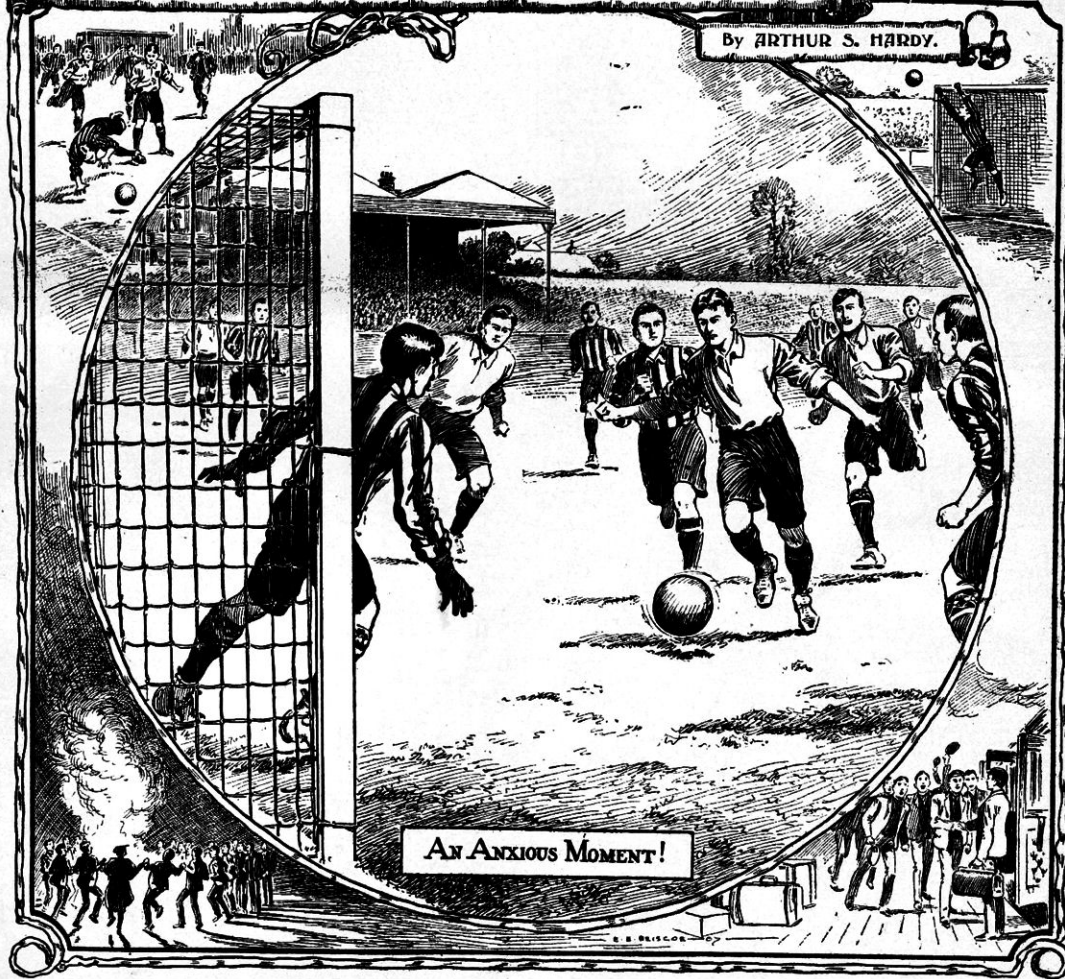
THE BOYS' REALM

of Sport & Adventure

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A LAD OF THE LEAGUE! Powerful New Football Story Starts To-day!

By ARTHUR S. HARDY.



AN ANXIOUS MOMENT!

No. 275. Vol. VI.]

EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY.

[SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1907. 8

SILVER CUPS AND MEDALS FOR FOOTBALLERS!

plaster with it, and shied it out. The others made a raid on the bookshelves, or seized anything they saw was worth taking.

Then Guy Northcote stepped forward. His face was white, his eyes blazed with suppressed fury, but when he spoke his voice was quite calm.

"He's a dangerous chap to tackle," muttered Jepson, on whom none of these signs were lost.

"I don't see why you should smash up my things," said Guy quietly. "I've done nothing to deserve it. If I were an outsider I might be able to understand. I haven't the power to restore the things you're destroying. If you won't let me, I'll give you my own things."

"Both!" said Pilling. "Look here, Northcote, I may as well tell you that we've no right to give you anything. You've seen to have taken it very well, which is also in your favor; but the order was sent out that you were to be ragged, and ragged you've got to be. It's no use kicking. You'd better by half take it quietly."

"Then the rest of the pictures—none of them of any value—were taken from the studio, two enterprising youths loosened the nails that held the overmantel in place, and this they carried to the window, where, out, the jingle and crash of the shattering mirror, heard far through the night, sending the bats and the owls to their roosts in the clustering ivy that clung to the old building in the garden.

And now Averdale, who had crossed to Guy Northcote's desk, seized a photograph frame, containing half a dozen photos, from the back of it.

"Hallo!" he cried. "Here's Northcote at all ages, and a beauty. I shouldn't wonder by the look of it, 'And there's a good deal of hair. What an luck! Well, they've got to go to the other rubbish."

He reeled towards the window; but as he could reach it he was stopped by Guy, the photograph frame was torn from his grasp, and with a tremor, he stretched his cousin full length on the floor.

Then he turned on the others like a fury, for his blood was up. He had kept himself in check, fearing what he had kept himself from doing, but now he was no longer in check, for he had seen that which he had feared if once he let himself go; but now he turned on his enemies like a madman.

"I'm not to be hit clean over the head with a terrific smack on the jaw, and a couple of others he seized and hurled through the door into the passage, and then he turned on the others.

"Out of this!" he cried. "I've no more your warning. I'm dangerous to meddle with when you're out of it, or it will be the worse for some of you."

Averdale picked himself up. He was bleeding slightly from the mouth, and the blow had soiled him.

"Come along, Jepson!" he said. "Don't stand there like a fool! On to him. He's got to be taught his lesson."

Guy followed Jepson to the window, and looked out. He saw that the beaten enemy had piled his things in a heap, and covered the contents of a can of petrol on them, and had lit them.

"The spirit had fled instantly, and already the pile was in a blaze. There was no saving the goods now. Pilling, Averdale, and the rest had joined hands, and were dancing round the bonfire in a perfect frenzy, shouting like madmen.

Then of a sudden a figure darted through a gateway, and ran towards them. Instantly a cry of "Proctor!" arose.

But they didn't care. Under Averdale's leadership they had defied the proctors—nay, the Head himself in this. Proctor it was. A moment later Herbert Mainwaring, M.A., one of the under-masters, came up. He snuffed grimly.

"Your escapade is known," he said. "Averdale, I shall be surprised if the Head doesn't send you down for this. Meanwhile, here's a telegram for you. It's just come up from the town, and as it was urgent I brought it to you without delay.

"More fuel for the fire, boys. Let's go back to Northcote's rooms and break the door down. The proctor held out the orange envelope to the boy.

"You'd better read it, Averdale," he said quietly. "Something in the man's tones frightened the boy, and stepping out of the ranks, he took the envelope, tore it open, and, straightening out the enclosed sheet, read the message by the light of the bonfire.

"Good!" he cried, his voice shaking with emotion. "My father, the Earl of Sefton, is dying!"

An exciting incident from 'The Terror of the Remove,' David being the hero. A good and a great New School story now commencing in our Wednesday Companion 'The Boy's Friend'.

THE BOY'S CHAPTER. A Friendly and Business Visit—Guy learns the Truth About Himself—His bold Rescue of the Boat—Guy Decides to Leave Renton.

It was early morning, and Guy Northcote leaned on his window-sill, looking down at the pile of rubbish which he had thrown on the cement below. This was all that remained of his belongings, and the twisted wires and steel pipes lying here and there were the only evidence that a piano once had been.

As he glanced gloomily round, wondering what was to do, he suddenly caught sight of one of the school porters walking a gentleman through the quadrangle in the direction of the gateway that led to the flight of steps giving access to the floor on which Guy's rooms were situated.

Immediately behind them followed a tall, well-dressed man about fifty, whose general appearance suggested the personality of a solicitor, or someone connected with the law.

"Uncle Benjamin and James Redmayne," he called out to Guy. "Whatever brought them here at this early hour of the morning? Something important, I have no doubt, for they are the very men I wish most to see."

A minute later they entered Guy's rooms. The porter was saving them to stare in astonishment at the wrecked apartment.

upon the table, all that remained, with the exception of a single chair, of his belongings of the night before. "That was what I wanted to speak to you about."

Guy looked astonished. "I don't understand, my lad," he said. "Well," said Guy, "I want to tell you who I am. Yesterday, on the football field, Lord Averdale was very rude to me, suggesting that I might be his cousin. It is true, but my father the Percy Northcote who married Mary Fairclough, youngest sister of the present Earl of Sefton."

Guy and Redmayne exchanged meaning glances. "It is perfectly true, my boy," said Guy quietly, and I am not at all sorry that you know, because it will make our explanation so much easier."

"Averdale really is my cousin," said Guy Northcote somewhat gloomily. "Then, Uncle Benjamin, judging from that, I should say you are no relation of mine whatever?"

Guy slipped off the hat he had been wearing. "You have guessed correctly, Guy," he said. "I am no relation of yours, neither is James Redmayne, here. He was your mother's solicitor, and it was through him that I got to see, saw to your education, and looked after you as a father might have done."

Guy slipped off the hat he had been wearing. "I don't see why you should have done that," he said, troubled. "I have never left money, which I have always been led to believe was not the case."

"I was not," interposed James Redmayne. "When everything had been disposed of, there was not enough to pay the creditors, and the cost of your dear mother's funeral came out of my own pocket."

"Then," said Guy, clenching his hands, "does that mean that I am not living on my charity all my life?"

"I don't not have been better to have told me what you were doing, and I should not have been able to earn my own living! I am here at Renton, and I am not allowed to leave here, I cannot afford to go to Oxford."

Guy adopted a purely formal manner. "I have had my own mind, my own money, and my own life, and I have never since had a tiny child, Garside had never passed under my control over the lad. What would happen when he had Guy?"

"Guy, my boy," he said, "I'll tell you why James Redmayne and myself have taken such an interest in you. Apart from the fact that we loved you, there was a great and brilliant future before you some day, which, when you had come into your own, would have compensated us for all our outlay and devotion to you."

"Will you be good enough to explain?" said Guy, stopping abruptly and facing the man. "Earl Sefton had never possessed a very robust constitution, Benjamin Garside's room on shifting his glance restlessly about the room as he spoke, and it is surprising to me that he has lasted so long. Most of the Faircloughs are weakly degenerate, and I think my own age could not be expected to last the allotted span. I was right. One by one they have passed under my control, and my own estate, until only the earl and his son, the present Lord Averdale, remained. Last night the earl was seized with a stroke of paralysis. He died, and I, as the only son, Lord Averdale will be Earl of Sefton, and you will become Lord Averdale. Within a year or two, perhaps, you yourself will be Earl of Sefton. Now, I dare say you can see why we have taken care of you, and had you educated by me."

"I'm not interested in you, and I don't care for the dogs as we might have done. Your interest in me was not founded on affection. I don't care for you, and I don't care for Uncle Benjamin either in contempt."

"I must admit, as James Redmayne here would do, that I had a great deal of interest in you, and I was not at all sorry that you should be the Earl of Sefton. Now, I dare say you can see why we have taken care of you, and had you educated by me."

"I might I ask," he said sarcastically, "whether you have ever kept an account of the moneys you have expended on me?"

"The accounts have been carefully kept," said James Redmayne. "The bill amounts to some thousands of pounds now. We shall, of course, expect you to repay us before we leave London come here."

"Oh, it shall be paid," said Guy bitterly. "Every penny of it. I am not likely to abridge my facilities. At the same time, I must thank you for the London come here."

"Yes," answered Guy, stopping and looking the man who had believed for years to be his uncle straight in the eye; "do not intend to live any longer under your protection. I shall go to the Head to-day, tell him everything, and start for London, or wherever else I may choose to go, to earn my own living as soon as I possibly can."

"What?" cried Guy. "I am not to be paid?" "I want no hall-mark," retorted Guy. "I am not to be a beggar. There shall be no 'Variety' for me."

Garside and Redmayne exchanged glances. "Do you mean to suggest that you intend to leave Renton College, said Garside sternly. "Yes," answered Guy, stopping and looking the man who had believed for years to be his uncle straight in the eye; "do not intend to live any longer under your protection. I shall go to the Head to-day, tell him everything, and start for London, or wherever else I may choose to go, to earn my own living as soon as I possibly can."

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TEDDY LESTER'S CHUMS. A Rattling New Tale of Slapton School. By JOHN FINNEMORE.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

TEDDY LESTER, a pupil at Slapton School; in Mr. Jayne's House; a schoolmaster; a letter to readers of THE BOYS' BELL.

JIMMY WEST, nicknamed the Bat. A new boy at Slapton School. He is the friend of Teddy's.

DIGBY, SANDY, and ITO NAGAN. (a little Jap), chums of Teddy Lester at Slapton.

GURD, GIBSON, and PALMER. Three bullies at Slapton School; also in Jayne's House.

The opening of a new term at Slapton School is made conspicuous by the arrival of Jimmy West. In Jayne's House, a schoolmaster, a letter to readers of THE BOYS' BELL.

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He sprang forward, and saw Ito turning from a window at the cottage.

"This place is locked up!" cried Ito.

"So was that," replied Teddy, jerking his thumb over his shoulder. "I lay a grinning grin on the bridge watching the flood there. But look! There's someone at the door."

He pointed to the open door of the third cottage. The Bat had disappeared, but they could hear his voice hammering and stammering away to someone inside.

Teddy, and found Jimmy West doing all he could to warn a labourer's wife of her danger. But the poor old Bat was excited, and his infirmity was worse than ever. His tongue became tangled into such knots that the woman could not understand him.

"You must get away from here at once!" cried Teddy. "The embankment's coming down, and if it once gives way the river will be all over the flat here in a twinkling!"

"I heard it was high, but surely it's not so high as that!"

"Yes, it is," cried Teddy. "You have no time to lose. Bring your children along, and don't lose a minute. Here, I'll carry this one!"

And Teddy bent to take a curly-headed little tot about two years old which clung to its mother's skirts. A boy of four stood on the other side.

The woman now became convinced of the nearness of danger, and turned very pale.

"I'll run upstairs and fetch my baby," she said. "It's asleep there."

"Don't lose a second!" the embankment was shaking under it, and the river is rising every moment. It is the woman wonderingly.

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They waited for some time in silence. At last, however, the water rose so high that it ran into sight on the opposite bank. They had seen several in the town being run along on trolleys to points where danger threatened, and surely one would be sent here at once to rescue them.

But though a crowd grew steadily on the bank, no boat appeared, and Teddy grew uneasy.

"What are they dilly-dallying about?" he said impatiently. "Where's that boat?"

"The w-w-water's r-r-rising!" said the Bat. "So it is," replied Teddy uneasily. "That looks as if more of the embankment had given way."

It leaned as far as he could out of the door, and looked up towards the river.

"I can't see the embankment from here," he said.

"You can see it from a window at the back," cried the woman.

The three boys ran through the door to which the woman pointed, and rushed to the window of the back-room.

There they saw a great burst from their pipes, for they saw at this moment a vast new piece of the embankment break away, and a flood now there reared itself on the very lip of the incoming flood a great tree. Torn away from the bank where it had grown for many years, it came down the river, and was carried down the furious stream like a cork. Its branches had caught in the stones left in the bottom of the river, and it stood in the flood, its top but upwards still it stood in air, topsturdy, its torn roots aloft. Then it swung over the embankment into the flood, and crashed as it fell from a bow, towards the clump of cottages.

A cry of horror burst from every throat. The boys shrank back from every one of the buildings! If so, their door was soiled.

With wild cries the boys watched the huge tree hurtle down a huge ravine in the side of the hill. On it came. Crash! The huge butt smote the end house and went through it as if the walls had been made of mud.

The tree, as it creered aside, caught in a frosty cddy of the flood.

The other two cottages rocked and trembled to their foundations, and for a moment the boys shrank back from every one of the buildings! If so, their door was soiled.

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"God!" cried Ito. "God, Teddy!"

partner will put you on the bank almost before you know you're afloat. He's about as useful as a shark's backbone.

Teddy held the raft steady, and the Bat's long arms came in very useful as he swung the three children aboard and packed them close against their mother. A woman put one arm round the pair of them and held them close until they were safe.

With a strip of the chest-ropes Ito had lashed his paddle loosely to one of the upright table-logs, and now stood calm and steady, with the handle held firmly in both hands.

At this moment the roar of the flood, a shrill, ringing shout came over the water. The three brave lads had been too busy with their task to look aside for a moment, and they had not given a single glance at the crowd.

But the crowd had been watching them eagerly, and had not missed a single item in their preparations. When it was seen that the woman and children were aboard the raft, and that one of the brave comrades was about to get them ashore, a tremendous cheer of encouragement burst from the watching throng.

"All right, old chap!" said Teddy to the little Jack.

"Hold tight!" said Ito quietly. "Let her go! I'll soon come back for you."

"Good luck!" cried Teddy; and "G-g-good luck!" said Ito to the crowd.

Then the two latter released their grip of the raft, and the current swung it at once away from the window.

It floated so critically as it floated off. The yellow flood seized it at once, and began to spin it round and toss it up and down like a top. But Ito soon put that right, and by a dexterous use of his paddle brought the nose round and held the raft steady in the current.

THE 12th CHAPTER.

The Fight with the Flood.

IT DID NOT attempt to do anything but to float, but this he did with wonderful skill.

The bank to the river-side flat curved round below and formed a little promontory. It aimed to steer his rather wobbly craft round the point, and to get to the promontory, where help could be afforded him from the shore.

Away spun and rocked the raft downstream, and yard by yard it worked the rudo vessel and its precious freight ashore.

The excitement on the river bank was tremendous. All the time a rousing cheer which hailed the start of the raft, and the people maintained a breathless silence, every eye fixed on Ito's struggle with the flood.

Among the crowd on the bank were Tom Sandys and Arthur Digby, the oldest and tried friends of Teddy and Ito - indeed, they were a score or more of Slapton boys there.

The rumour had flown abroad - in the swift way that rumour will - that some Slapton boys were being put to death, and a number of their school-fellows had rushed to the scene.

Tom and Arthur had remained with their friends, and were full of anxiety.

"Why, it's old Teddy," said Tom, "and Ito's with him, and they've got a new chap that Teddy's been giving a hand to lately."

"How did they get there?" said Arthur.

"Can't say," said Tom. "You never know where Teddy'll turn up. He's a bit of a stormy petrel, and he's a boat!"

"Where's a boat? Why don't they bring a boat along?"

But the boys soon learned why. The flood was simply devastating the lower end of the town, and the boats were doing all that could be done to save life and property.

The cottage woman had bit on the truth. The boats and boatmen were all engaged at Miller Point.

When Ito left the ruined cottage with the raft, Tom and Arthur watched every inch of his progress with breathless interest.

"He's coming!" cried Tom. "He's swinging right across the flood. Nibble old Ito!"

"Slapton for ever!" yelled Foulkes, who was one of the crowd; and the cry was taken up every man, woman and child.

"Wait a bit - wait a bit!" came in anxious tones from an old bargeman who stood at Tom's elbow.

"That brave lad ain't ashore yet, not by no manner of means. I doubt he's far from putting out."

"What do you mean?" cried Tom.

"Why, this air," said the old bargeman, who had spent a lifetime in learning the tricks and turns of a navigable river, "there's a strong current inshore sweeping past our very feet. When he gets into that current he'll be able to get across in time he'll be carried past the point, an' then -"

"If he only gets near enough, I'll sling this line aboard, an' we'll row you down!" continued the old bargeman; and he putted the rope, already coiled for throwing, which was laid over one arm.

In and in came the raft. Many in the crowd, who knew little of the tricks of the flood, were already hailing the landing with joyous shouts, but the old bargeman remained silent.

"Ah!" he said at last, "there it be, the current which raced round the edge of the little bay for which Ito was steering. The suck of the undertow sweeping the raft offshore, and began to hurry it downstream. The crowd gave a cry of anxiety and uneasiness. Why did not the raft come straight inshore, as it had been doing? Why did it swing away downstream parallel with the bank?"

It knew very well. He had recognised at once the dangers of this swift, hidden current, and now he strove with all his might to drive the raft across it.

Slowly - slowly he forged across the darting stream, but swiftly - swiftly he was hurried down it. The promontory was drawing nearer - nearer - terribly nearer. Once that was passed the raft would sweep out to the broad bosom of the rolling flood, and nothing could save its load of helpless passengers.

"Throw - throw!" cried Tom to the old bargeman. "Sling your line out!"

But the old man shook his head. "No use," he said briefly. "Couldn't reach here. No man on earth could sling that far."

And now the crowd set up a cry of despair for the raft, despite the noble efforts of its gallant little steersman, began to swing astidely away. The brave undertow was mastering it and driving it offshore.

For two seconds Tom surveyed the scene with a set jaw and staring eyes. His brain was working at express speed. What could be done to save this heroic little chum, the poor mother, and the innocent children? In a flash he saw the only chance, and he leapt to it.

He seized the old bargeman by the arm and cried: "Come on - come on! We can do it yet!"

The old man did not see what Tom meant; but he ran beside him, urged forward by the eager tones of Slapton's finest athlete, and Arthur Digby ran with them.

As they hurried on, Tom announced his plan in a few waggled words: "I am going to swim off the point there with a line. It is the only chance."

The experienced old riverman saw Tom's plan at once, and agreed.

"Ay, ay, sir, if ye've the mind to do it. 'Tis their only chance."

stream, and he redoubled his efforts to edge the raft inshore. There were now a few frightful moments of fearful tension for the crowd. Would the heroic comrades effect a meeting? Would the raft be swept by before Tom could gain it?

Then a cheer, a veritable roar of triumph, burst out. A strong hand shot up from the water and seized the side of the raft, then up bobbed a dark head, and Tom climbed aboard amid the frenzied shouts of the on-lookers.

The rescue of the raft-load was now quite easy. The line was held fast by many hands ashore where Arthur and the bargeman had been paying it out. Tom made the other end fast to a table leg, and the raft was swiftly drawn to the side, where several neighbours were waiting to take charge of the mother and her children.

Tom leaped nimbly ashore, utterly regardless of those who pressed upon him with praises and congratulations.

"Just help me to tow the raft upstream," he said. "I've got to make another trip to fetch off Teddy and the Bat."

"Don't trust that again. Better wait for a boat," cried the old bargeman.

"Impossible," replied Ito. "Those crazy old codgers may come down with a run at any minute."

"Look, look, the houses are rocking!" cried Tom, and his cry silenced all objections.

It seemed doubtful that the houses would stand till the two brave boys left behind could be fetched off.

A score of willing hands aided Ito to draw the raft some distance up the bank, and again he launched on the brown bosom of the flood amid the loud cheers of the intensely excited crowd.

THE 13th CHAPTER.

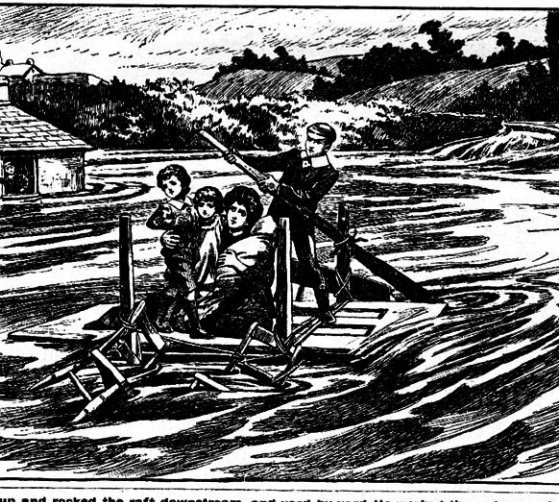
Adrift!

AT THE WINDOW of the flooded cottage Teddy and the Bat stood side by side, watching eagerly for the raft as it shot down towards them on the flood.

The rocking of the houses had warned them that the flood was undermining the foundations, and they knew that it was time for them to go.

"Good!" grunted Teddy. "We'll do it yet. Bat, my son, Ito is coming down on us in fine style!"

The Bat nodded, and then stretched out his long arms. Ito was coming swiftly down towards them, steering with one hand, while in the other he held the old bargeman's line, which he had brought with him.



Away spun and rocked the raft downstream, and yard by yard it worked the rudo vessel and its precious freight ashore.

They ran along the edge of the water and gained the point of the promontory. They had now well outstripped the raft, which was, however, steadily coming downstream, and not making an inch of way inshore, despite Ito's tremendous efforts.

Down went Tom's cap and jacket, off went his waistcoat and shoes; while the old bargeman nuzzed a nose ready for Tom's waist.

The rope was adjusted, and within an instant's delay, Tom leapt into the boiling stream.

Yard by yard Tom drove his way through the seething flood with long, powerful strokes. He, too, was driven downstream by the terrific rush of the water, but he strove to make his course as direct as possible lest he should swing farther out of the rope and yet fall short of the raft.

He had seen his gallant friend leap into the stream, and he redoubled his efforts to edge the raft inshore. There were now a few frightful moments of fearful tension for the crowd. Would the heroic comrades effect a meeting? Would the raft be swept by before Tom could gain it?

As he drew near the window Ito slung the line out. The Bat caught it deftly, and then he and Teddy soon pulled the raft up to the window.

"All aboard!" sang out Teddy gaily, and the two boys were beside their gallant commander.

Ito clipped his paddle deeply in the water, and the raft shot away along the surface of the furious stream.

Tom must see her more squarely across the flood this time," said Ito. "We had a near shave of being carried into the main stream last time. There's the piece of current inshore. Brave old Tom saved us though."

"Good old Tom!" said Teddy. "I saw him swim out with the line, and he's here!"

Teddy and Ito glanced over their shoulders in time to see another huge section of the embankment swing bodily away before the flood. The water, which had reared its tawny crest high above the crumbling masonry, then dashed forward with terrific and irresistible force. It rushed on with tremendous power, and the water, which had vanished completely, hurled down in utter ruin.

"Whew!" whistled Teddy. "We're off only just in time. If you'd been two minutes later, Ito!"

"Hold tight! Hold tight!" cried Ito. "The water itself will be on us in a few seconds!"

The boys clung with all their strength to their tiny rafts, every eye fixed on the huge wave darting upon them. Would their tiny raft hold together in that frightful maelstrom of rushing water?

At the next instant, the boiling flood caught them in its awful grip. A vast mass of yellow water, whose surface forced its way beneath the surface, sent it spinning round and round like a chip in a whirlpool.

But the spinning of the cottage was hung together, and rose nobly like the surface with its load of three drenched, breathless boys.

Teddy dashed the water from his eyes and looked down.

"God, we're all here," he grunted. "Then his blood ran cold as Ito's quiet voice announced the worst of his fate. The wave has washed it to pieces."

"And we're being carried into the main stream!" yelled Teddy. "Look, the shore's much farther off than this. Now turn of the flood is setting offshore!"

"It is," said Ito.

"Can't we swim for it!" shouted Teddy. "Come on! Every second means we're farther to go to reach the bank."

He began to pull off his shoes, but stopped as a strutting crow came from the end of a door on which they were crouching and clinging.

"I can't see a swim!" said the Bat.

"That settles it then, old chap," said Teddy. "We'll stick to the raft and try to fit up another paddle."

The crowd on the shore set up a loud cry of horror and dismay when they saw the wave sweep the raft and its gallant band out into the main stream. But they were helpless, and could only watch as the water rose.

On board the raft the plucky boys were as busy as bees. Ito made a loop in the line and tried to nose the water away from the wood. At the third or fourth attempt he secured it, and dragged it aboard. Then the boys set to work with their pocket-knives to hack a rough handle into shape.

By this time they had been carried right out into the open stream, and were being hurried downwards on the full rush of the flood. But they were not to be dismayed. The water was much smoother, and the raft rode quite easily, save that being under no guidance, it swirled round now and again as it went on.

Twice or thrice a huge piece of wreckage came dangerously near, and the boys were twice or thrice in the danger passed. But soon Teddy's unquenchable spirits soared up the piece of driftwood began to assume the shape of a rough paddle.

"I'll soon begin to work her inshore again!" he cried. "I'll soon be up to the neck in the water, and we've only the luck to dodge these forests which have gone ashore, we'll be safe and sound yet."

Suddenly Ito raised his head.

"What's that frightful roaring noise round the bend in front?" he asked.

Teddy listened, and caught the sound. Above the uproar of the rushing flood there rang a dull, dull, dreadful, a hoarse roar of horrible import. As he caught its meaning Ito's face went as white as wood ash.

"The weir! The weir!" he cried. "The weir! I had forgotten it!"

And now the raft swept round into full view of a danger which had been falling with hoarse thunder in a huge loiling catraet where nothing could live for a moment.

Caught in that whirlpool of conflict of the rushing flood, their tiny raft was beaten under in an instant, and its occupants were hurled into the air, and its occupants were hurled into the air, and its occupants were hurled into the air.

"The paddle! The paddle!" cried Teddy. "Forty paddles could not save us," said Ito, his little voice full of despair. "We are far too far out in the stream to be able to escape."

The Bat said nothing. He only raised himself, and gazed with staring eyes and blanched face on the awful destruction which lay so near.

Teddy's face went as white as wood ash. "The weir! The weir!" he cried. "The weir! I had forgotten it!"

Straight in front of them the mighty flood swept over a deep weir, falling with hoarse thunder in a huge loiling catraet where nothing could live for a moment.

Caught in that whirlpool of conflict of the rushing flood, their tiny raft was beaten under in an instant, and its occupants were hurled into the air, and its occupants were hurled into the air, and its occupants were hurled into the air.

"The weir! The weir!" he cried. "The weir! I had forgotten it!"

And now the raft swept round into full view of a danger which had been falling with hoarse thunder in a huge loiling catraet where nothing could live for a moment.

Caught in that whirlpool of conflict of the rushing flood, their tiny raft was beaten under in an instant, and its occupants were hurled into the air, and its occupants were hurled into the air, and its occupants were hurled into the air.

"The weir! The weir!" he cried. "The weir! I had forgotten it!"

This thrilling new school and adventure story will be continued on Saturday next.

THE FIRST MATCH OF THE SEASON



A FOOTBALL STORY BY JACK NORTH

When the Excelsior forwards again came swinging down the field, and Dann put the ball neatly to the centre, Fred plunged forward and came heavily to grass. Archoll's foot had been thrust out, and he had fallen over it.

THE 1st CHAPTER.
Sticking to His Club.

"SAY, Freddy!"
"Yes, Jack?"
The first-walker was Jack Reckless, centre-half of the Branchurch Rovers Football Club, and it was his young brother Fred who answered. They were the best of chums, those two, though there was a wide disparity in their ages. Jack was twenty-seven, Fred barely seven.

"I'm commissioned with an offer to you."
It was the last week in August, and Jack Reckless had just come from the Rovers ground, where hard practice had been going on in the light of the setting sun—a sun that had poured down fiery rays all day, and had gone to its rest really, betokening another broiling hot day on the morrow. Jack had had a bath and had changed before leaving the ground, but he was not cool yet.

Neither was Fred for that matter. But Fred had not been playing football. He had been working late and hard at the shop. He was apprenticed to John Watkins, the cycle-dealer in Branchurch High Street, and he was very keen on his trade, so keen and eager to learn that he had far to become Mr. Watkins's right-hand man in a short space of time.

Someone had brought in a badly-damaged bicycle. He was a stranger passing through the town, who had met with an accident, and wanted his machine put right before resuming his way next morning. It was half-past six then. Half-past seven was closing-time.

"Here, Fred, you're the man for this job!" Mr. Watkins had said. And Fred had started at once. The owner of the machine wanted it at nine o'clock in the forenoon. At half-past seven it was quite apparent to Fred that either he must stay after hours, or the owner must wait in the morning. So was only a casual customer. They would probably never see him again. But Fred knew his employer hated failing to redeem a promise, and Mr. Watkins had promised that the bicycle should be ready at the hour named. So the lad had stayed on. At half-past eight, he had been able to leave feeling comfortably that an hour's work in the morning would finish the job; and as he went to work at seven, that left him a good margin.

Jack had come in while he was getting rid of the day's dirt before sitting down to supper. "Is it a good offer?" asked Fred.

"Well, I don't want to leave Mr. Watkins, you know; and I can't, anyway, because my indentures won't be out for another year."
Oh, that won't be necessary. You can go on at the shop if you can square Watkins. It's just this: The secretary happened to be passing when you kids were practising last Saturday afternoon, an' he seems to have been rather struck with your form. He says that if you're to play for our reserves, he can guarantee you a pound a week to start with, an' there's no reason why you shouldn't keep on playing your work, as long as John Watkins would let you when necessary. Of course, if that was all, it wouldn't be anything much. But that isn't all. If you train on as you ought to do, you'd be in the first team an' the maximum wage before long—in two or three seasons, say.

The offer was a dazzling one to Fred. A

pound a week, besides what he received from the shop, and increased wages to look forward to very shortly! He sat down on the edge of his bed and looked hard at his brother, who stood with one foot on a chair, his elbow on his knee, and his chin in the palm of his hand, regarding him.

"It's worth thinkin' over, Freddy. It isn't as though you were asked to chuck your trade at once. I'll go down an' see John if you like—be and I've old friends, you know—and I don't think he'll put difficulties in the way. Of course, you'd have to be away from the shop a good deal—all day Saturday once a fortnight, an' then there'd be the practise an' the trainin'—though I might get you let off some of that."

Mr. Watkins wouldn't like it, Jack. He's gettin' to depend a good deal on you, you know. He gives me most of the tricky jobs now. Only the night there was a gentleman came in with a badly jiggered-up machine. Front rim buckled

Oh, I dare say you think you're independent, old man, but I guess cycle squanders are quite an easy come by as good-class footballers. I'll look in an' see John to-morrow."
"Wait a jiff, Jack, I'm not sure that I can."
"I's p'pose I'd be waded every Saturday for the reserves—not just now an' then?"

"I can't answer for that, not absolutely. It depends on your form. But I don't think you need have much fear."

"Tim's that at all. What I mean is, if I joined there wouldn't be any chance of my playin' for the Excelsior?"

"Of course there wouldn't, stupid! If you're to have your pound a week you must sign on, an' once you've signed on you can't possibly play for any club but the Rovers."

"Then it's all off, Jack," answered Fred rather ruefully. "That didn't strike me at first, you see. I can't possibly do it."

"Why not? You don't mean to say you're goin' to let that little pillin' kid's club of yours stand in the way of your playin' real football?"

"We do play football," said Fred stoutly. "An' it isn't a little pillin' club. You see if the Excelsiors don't do jolly well this season. We weren't so bad last an' we're heavier an' stronger now, an' have got two or three good new members. An', besides, I couldn't back out after they've made me captain an' all that. You see, I started the club really. It would look jolly mean to desert it now for to honour an' glory of playin' for the Rovers' Reserve."

"Honour and glory—and hard cash," answered his brother significantly.

"Oh, I'm not forgettin' the money, Jack. I'm very sorry to have to refuse that. But, on the other hand, I'm not sure that I quite want to be a pro. I love the game; an' I've got a feeling that somehow I'd rather play it just for love of it. I don't mean that you pros, don't love it, or that I think anyone has a right to look down on pros, in general. You sicks find better fellows than most of our Branchurch players. But, there's other sorts. Look at Dawkins an' Glib in the Excelsior team, the sort of brutes one wouldn't care to walk on the same side of the street with!"

"Well, I wouldn't say you're altogether wrong. You have a right to be proud, and one that suits you; it ought to pay you to stick to it. I wish sometimes that I'd stuck to my work. I could have managed that and the foot-

ball, too, though I hadn't sense enough to see it at the time."

Jack Reckless had been an assistant at the big Board school in Branchurch, when his fine play had led the Rovers to see his signature. It had seemed a grand thing to him then to be making money enough to live well on without the five days a week drudgery that his calling had entailed. He had never thought then that in so comparatively short a time he would have to be looking forward with something like dread to the end of his football career. Not that he was nearly done with yet. But at twenty-seven one sees thirty-five much nearer than at twenty-one, and not many players keep their places in strong League teams after thirty-five.

"I say, Jack, I wish you'd come an' have a look when we turn out for practice again. You wouldn't call us a lot of kids then, I fancy, though there's no doubt you could give us some useful hints."

"I'll come, if there isn't any practice or trainin' for us. Ready for supper, Freddy? Come along, then."

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
A Motor-Bike Ride.

YOUTH'RE right, Fred. The whole team shapes jolly smartly, an' you ought to win a lot of matches. Have you entered for the Junior Cup?"

"Oh, yes. Didn't I tell you?"
"Not that I remember. When's your first match? I don't mean Cup-tie; I know they don't begin just yet."

"We play Stoke Eaton next Saturday."
"Pretty strong, aren't they, for a village team? There was some talk of askin' that right-lark of theirs, young Archoll, the squire's son, to play for us; but the directors weren't quite satisfied that he was safe enough. He's an old Thirlstone boy, you know; goes up to Cambridge in the spring, I believe."

Fred nodded.
"I haven't seen him; but they talk a lot about him. I expect we shall find him pretty difficult to get past, I say, Jack. Are you usin' your motor-bike this evening?"

"No. Do you want to borrow it?"
"If you don't mind."

"All right, I know I needn't tell you to be careful with it. Fred went off in high glee. It was Sunday afternoon. He had duly attended church with his father in the morning, and even Mr. Reckless, though he was one of the stern and unbending type, recognised that the boys were at his work for some sixty-six hours at least in the course of the week, needed fresh air and exercise on a Sunday, and made no objection to these evening spins.

With Jack's motor-bike to ride, Fred would have to go alone, since none of his friends had the means, recognised that the boys were at his particular chum, Tom Trundle, was unable to accompany him in any case, being laid up with a cold.

Fred did not wait for tea. He got his mother to wrap him up a big slice of cake. It would be easy enough for him to get a cup of tea or a bottle of ginger-beer on the way to drink with it. At about five o'clock, when the streets were mostly deserted, because folk were indoors at that afternoon, recognised that the boys were at his particular chum and Ecclesden, means something much more substantial than water-like

broad-and-butter and doll's-house-like cups of a decoction that may or may not be "real China"—he was riding through Branchurch High Street, sounding the "tooter," now and then out of showy joy rather than because it was in any way necessary; then over the low bridge that spans the little River Brain, along Ecclesden Westgate Street, and out to the open Country by way of the Causeway and Eastgate.

The motor-bike ran well and smoothly, carrying him without difficulty to the top of the steepest upgrades. It was glorious when one came to a stretch of straight, wide road to put her along at a twenty-mile-an-hour gallop—it may have been a bit more than that, but Fred tried not to be tempted into exceeding the legal limit—and to feel the fresh air rush past, and see the country that lay ahead change as one sped on; still more glorious when his roundabout route brought him riding, as it seemed, straight into a sunset of the most wonderful hues, flooding part of the unshining acres of hill and dale with its level brilliance, leaving other parts in shadow.

His way now led towards Stoke Eaton. A mile or two on this side of the village there was an exceedingly awkward corner, high-banked, and at an acute angle. Remembering it, Fred slowed down to about six miles an hour, and took it very carefully on the proper side. But his precaution availed him little. Somehow it may have saved him, since the full car went singing down the road, with the collision would have been worse had he been going at a higher rate of speed, and in the middle of the road; but it did not prevent the collision.

A motor-car, the only occupant of which was the driver, swept round that corner on the wrong side at a reckless pace. It was upon Fredly directly he had turned. He was within two feet of the bank then; closer he had no time or chance to get. The bonnet of the car almost struck him; the fore-wheel hit his machine somewhere, and sent him heading into the bank.

The driver of the car could not have failed to see what he had done; but he never stopped—never even looked back. Once round the corner he thrust the lever to full-speed, and his powerful car went singing down the road, with the red, setting sun behind it, at a pace that made a cyclist, who was wheeling his machine up Egbert's Hill, turn and gaze after it with a very disapproving look.

Five minutes later, this same cyclist, a good-looking, bearded man of about thirty-seven, came upon Fred, who lay on the grassy bank half stunned, with the wreckage of what remained of Jack's precious motor-bike straying the road beneath him.

The car had not struck the boy anywhere, but Fred had simply lifted him out of his seat and flung him upwards. He had had a nasty shaking, but there were no limbs broken, not even so much as a sprain, scarcely a scratch or a bruise.

"Hallo, youngster," cried the bearded eyes.

"I don't think so," replied Fred. "I was flung off and landed up here."

"Good thing you did land up there. You're in luck not to have been hurt any more. One of those blackguardly road-hogs, I suppose? I can see it wasn't just a spill on your own account."
"No; it was a car," answered Fred. "A chocolate-coloured car came rippin' round the corner on the wrong side at about ninety miles

Plucky Phil Farren

A Marvellous New Tale of Peril and Adventure.

BY A POPULAR AUTHOR.

THE 1st CHAPTER.

The Mystery of the Missing Desk-Key.

UNDERSTAND, boys," said Mr. Radnor, the headmaster of the Brythwaite Classical School, fixing a pair of pince-nez upon his nose, and then peering above them at the class—"I understand that I am determined to put an end to this absurd practical joking! It has become an intolerable nuisance. It is destroying the discipline of the school. It is creating ill-feeling among you, where good-fellowship only should exist."

Mr. Radnor cleared his throat, took off his pince-nez, and nervously put them on again. His glance travelled over the boys, and rested at last upon a handsome, bright-faced, and merry-looking lad of about sixteen, named Phil Farren, who had just winked at his chum, Arthur Castleton, seated in the row before him.

"There is—er—no need for me to mention the names of the leading spirits in these detestable forms of fun-making," continued the headmaster, "for they are well known to you all; but I wish to warn every boy in the class that, as minor punishments seem to have no avail, I shall have to take serious steps to stamp out the evil. The class is dismissed."

Eager to get out of the classroom, the boys instantly rose, and in orderly fashion began to leave their seats; but before they had time to reach the door, the master's voice rang out in a commanding tone:

"Attention, boys!" The boys stood stock-still, and looked at Mr. Radnor in wonderment. That something of unusual importance had happened was evident. The master's face had become serious and worried-looking. First he dived a hand into his trousers pockets, then he felt in the pockets of his gown. What he expected to find was not there.

"Humph!" he muttered. "That's very, very strange!"

The master turned to his desk, fumbled at the lock, and a fresh exclamation broke from his lips.

"Has anyone seen the key of my desk?" he asked. "I am positive that I left it in the lock when I left the room a quarter of an hour ago."

No answer was returned, the master as he glanced round the room, and he turned again to the desk. It was a high desk, made of mahogany, standing on a base of stone.

Mr. Radnor placed his hand on the sloping lid, and, to his intense surprise, it yielded to his pressure and flew upwards. The wondering boys saw the master's head disappear within the desk, and heard the rustle of papers being moved as if he was searching for something; then his head reappeared again, and the boys noticed that the colour had left his face, that his nervousness had gone, and that his features had grown harsh and stern.

"They had seen that look before, and knew then that something really serious had happened."

"Has anyone seen any boy near my desk this afternoon?" asked Mr. Radnor, in cold, commanding tones.

"Yes, sir," answered two boys in the same breath.

"Ah! Whom did you see, Morton?" asked the master, addressing a tall, fat, party-faced boy who seemed to be always sleeping.

"F-Farren, sir!" he replied nervously.

"And whom did you see, Farren?" said the master, turning to the other boy who had answered his question. "You saw Morton, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir," promptly replied Phil. "I saw no one. I was there myself. I was there when you left the room a quarter of an hour ago."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Radnor, sarcastically. "Another of your little jokes, I suppose. What was he doing at my desk, Morton?"

"The boys had begun to titter and to whisper among themselves, and they looked at Phil as if they were looking intently at Morton, or 'Piggy Morton,' as he was called, and wondered whether he was going to 'peach.' Money had shuffled his feet, turned scarlet, and looked on the floor.

"He—he'll just make some joke on me if—I tell me."

"Farren said not nothing of the kind," said the master. "Morton, I command you to tell me what happened at my desk a short while ago."

"I am willing to tell you, sir—" began Phil; but the master silenced him.

"He—he put on your cap and gown, sir," stammered Morton, "took up a position at your desk, sir, and pretended that he was you. He—"

"I see—I see!" cut in Mr. Radnor coolly, frowning at Phil. "Farren disregarded my order to remain in his seat, and endeavoured to make fun of my position by mimicking my duties. Is that not so, Farren?"

"Yes, sir," said Phil; "but I did not look at it in that light."

"Possibly not," said the master sternly. "I will take until to-morrow morning's class to consider the punishment I shall give you to give up the key of my desk and the other article which you have taken as part of the joke."

"What do you mean, sir?" asked Phil Farren. The smile had vanished from his face, and he looked frankly and fearlessly at the master's face. "Do you accuse me of taking the key, and also some article from your desk?"

"You put the matter very bluntly, Farren," replied Mr. Radnor, a little nervously, "but that in effect is what I do mean. You no doubt have taken them in your mistaken idea of humour."

"Well, then, sir," said Phil, raising himself proudly erect. "allow me to tell you that no British boy thinks that thieving is a joke!"

Arthur Castleton and many of Phil's chums could not refrain from cheering this bold speech.

"Silence!" commanded the master, frowning angrily.

Brythwaite Classical School was only a small public school, and the Fifth Form, which

is the only one that concerns this story, was taken by Mr. Radnor, the headmaster himself. On the afternoon with which our story deals Mr. Radnor had left the room for a while, taking off his 'Varsity robe and placing it upon his desk.

In his absence, Phil Farren had put on the master's cap and gown, and in his 'mistaken idea of humour,' as the master put it, had called several of his chums out for summary punishment.

The summary punishment developed into a scrimmage in which practically every member of the class had taken part. Suddenly there came a cry of "Give," and when Mr. Radnor appeared in the doorway every boy was seated at his desk, apparently as busy at his studies as at the moment when the master had left the room.

"You misunderstand me, Farren," said the master. "I do not wish to accuse you of thieving. Have I your word of honour that you have not taken the key and the other article I have referred to?"

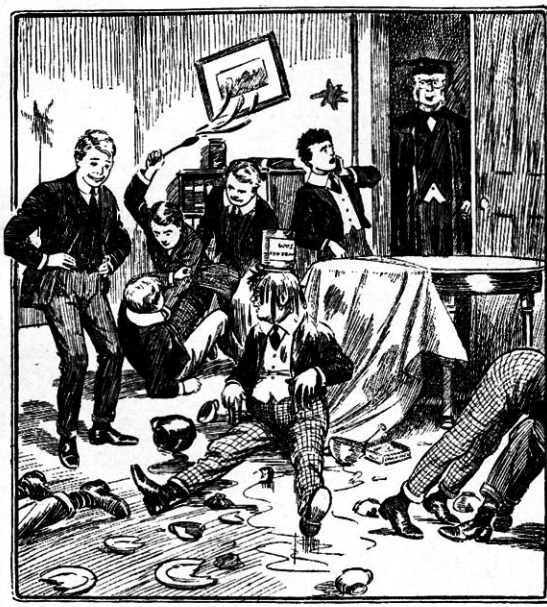
"I assure you, sir, that I know nothing about them!" said Phil. "I am sorry now that I went to your desk, but I did not touch the key of it, or anything inside it."

"Very good, Farren. I believe you. The explanation of the mystery must be looked for elsewhere. Boys, you are dismissed."

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

The Disappointed Birthday Party.

TWO days had elapsed since the scene just described had taken place. No explanation of the mystery of the missing key and the other article had been arrived at. What this article really was had not the whole school conjecturing, but as Mr. Radnor did not choose to tell anyone, the widdet rumours were set afloat concerning it.



"Well crowned, Piggy!" laughed Phil. "Well crowned, king of the pigs!"

The sympathy of the boys was extended to their favourite, Phil Farren, the hot-headed, good-natured, handsome boy who was as full of pranks as an egg is full of meat, for they were of opinion that he had been badly treated by Mr. Radnor, while Piggy Morton was more disliked than ever, and openly denounced, even by the small boys, as a sneak.

For two days Phil Farren and his chum Arthur Castleton had hardly dared to laugh in their desire to please Mr. Radnor by refraining from practical joking.

But it was the most miserable two days they had spent in their lives; they declared, and the whole Fifth Form seemed as if a pall of gloom surrounded it.

But by the third morning this gloom began to wear off. Immediately after morning school, however, the reminder of it vanished as if by magic, and the principal factor in the changed conditions was the receipt by Phil of a letter.

It was Phil Farren's sixteenth birthday. Phil was an orphan, but he lived with an uncle and aunt, and they, having no children of their own, almost idolized him.

To commemorate his birthday they had sent him a postal order for half-a-sovereign. Phil

was in the midst of a small group of admirers when the letter was given him.

"Pip, pip! Here's luck!" cried he. "Chaps all, you are all in my study for a study or school this afternoon. Don't get gorging at dinner, or you won't be able to do justice to my tuck-in. Here, Arthur, go and get more bread-crumbs to the village. Tell old Grandus Gregory to send me a half-crown cake with plenty of icing, a two-pound jar of strawberry jam, and a tin of fruit, and a dozen jam-tarts and pastries, and a pound box of preserved fruits."

"Go easy, Phil! Have you come into a fortune! You're making our mouths water. We sha'n't want any of the school grub at all."

"And you," Arthur continued, Phil "tell grandma to buck up and let me have the tuck by four-thirty the latest. You'd better tell her to mark the 'Study No. 14,' so that there shall be no mistake."

"My lord, the carriage waits," said Arthur Castleton, with a mock bow. "I mean your orders, my noble peer, shall be attended to," and avoiding the impetus that Phil sought to give him with the end of his boot, he ran off to the carriage in the village.

Mr. Radnor was in a sour mood that afternoon. Just previous to dismissing the class, he said:

"Boys, I have given you three days now in order to supply the explanation to the mystery of the missing key of my desk, but none of you has come forward to say you do not think it of sufficient importance. But you are mistaken. It is a very serious affair. The key, and the article which accompanied it, and the annoyance its loss has caused me. It is not so, however, with regard to the other article. May I make one last appeal to one of you to come forward and state anything you may know about it?"

The master paused and looked round the room searchingly, but no one answered him.

"I am determined to get to the bottom of this matter," continued Mr. Radnor. "It amounts to this, boys. I lock my desk, leaving an article of value in it, and return to the room after being absent for less than twenty minutes to discover that the desk has been opened in my absence, and the article abstracted. One of you who is now sitting before me must have opened it and taken out the article. I am assured that this was not done in an mistaken notion of joking. Will the boy who has done this thing come forward and confess it, and I promise to deal lightly with him."

There was another impressive silence, but still no one answered.

"What was the article, sir?" inquired Phil, at last.

"A purse containing over thirty pounds in banknotes and coins," said the master.

"A number of astonished boys went round the room. This was unexpected news, far worse than any of them had imagined.

"I had hoped before this," went on Mr. Radnor, "that the misguided boy who took this purse would have repented of his sin, and would have confessed it to me. I am very surprised and disappointed. I cannot yet think that there exists a thief amongst you. I still believe that there is some mistake—that there will be some explanation of the mystery. But it is my duty to the Form as well as to the whole school, that the shadow of suspicion should be removed from it as quickly as possible, and unless I hear news of the missing purse, I shall have to take serious steps to secure its recovery. That completes our studies for the day."

"The boys left the room with chastened spirits. They were partly indignant at the Head's speech, partly disgusted, and for a long time discussions took place in the corridors, in the common-room, and out in the playing-fields about the matter. The most disgusted of all the boys, however, was Phil Farren.

"The thief's a cad—a rotter!" he exclaimed, in the hot-headed manner that was characteristic of him when roused. "The measly scoundrel put the whole class under suspicion! Yet it's quite true, as old Raddy says, that the thief must have taken his purse while he was out of the room."

"Hail a motor-car!" chipped in Arthur Castleton, who was a little more philosophic than his chum. "Raddy put the purse in some other place and then forgot it!"

"No, no, no," said Phil passionately. "Old Raddy wouldn't accuse any of us unless he was positive certain of our guilt. Do you not refuse to tell us what the article was? That was to give him time to see if he could remember putting it anywhere else, as well as to give the absolute cad who sneaked it a chance to return it to him. Hoofing out will be far too good for the rotter when he's caught. He ought to be put in prison. Tell you what, chaps: we'll form a detective agency and bound out the beast. It'll be no end of fun, and we'll be doing a good deed as well as a good turn by discovering the dirty rascal and getting him hoofed."

A chorus of assent went up from the half-dozen boys who stood in the corner of the common-room about Phil.

"Well, then, chaps," continued Phil Farren, "we can't do anything more than to go home. Step this way for Study No. 14, and was betide you, my gallant rascals, if ye haven't appetites that would make even Piggy Morton feel ashamed."

It was customary for the boys to take their meals in the dining-hall, but those who wished to be more particular in their choice of food, at their own expense and in their own studies,

PLUCKY PHIL FAREN.

(Continued from the previous page.)

could do so on giving notice to the house-keeper. Phil had arranged all this, and the moment the boys entered the study which shared with Arthur and Gordon, they saw the kettle singing merrily on the hearth, and the small study-table laid with a dainty white cloth and silver service, and all the other articles necessary for tea.

"Hoorsy!" said Phil. "Enter my noble nobles, and welcome to you all. (The under-housemaid, your diligent young thing, you have well earned your sixpenny tip, and I am your devoted admirer henceforth, and forever, bid her down, my some, well so!"

Phil broke off short and looked across the table to Arthur.

"Where's the tick, old dear?" he said. "Did you give grandma explicit instructions?"

"You bet," said Arthur, searching about the room. "I'll send the note to the gate. I'll nip down to the village on my bike and give her a yard or two of red tape the same pattern as this," he said, holding up the tongue.

Within five minutes he was back again. "Grandma," he said breathlessly—"grandma said she sent a basket full of the tick more than your own size."

"Then rouse out, warriors," cried Phil, "and get on the giddy warpath! Some louts have dared open your eyes, and you must do it for all they're worth! Quick march, double, the invasion commence!"

In breezy good-humour, the boys, headed by Phil, roused up the room and galloped down the corridor. A boy at the far end came out to see the reason for the noise, and he was instantly accosted upon the spot.

"See anything of a tuck-basket, prisoner?" asked Phil. "Answer truthfully or run the risk of being hit with a goodly stick of tongue."

"The boy—Henry Lawson by name—drew a box of matches from a pocket and prosed it open."

"It isn't in there," he said; "nor is it in my waistcoat-pocket, yet I suppose it was one of the ordinary-sized Faren baskets of tuck—open these about you."

"It is bigger than your box of sandwut, you see," said Phil, smacking Lawson's head.

"I'm braying, by my halidom, I will smite thee here and there," said Phil, and he did so.

"Look here, chaps," said Lawson, after this style of banter had continued for some time, and after there had been a good deal of scuffling, "haven't you seen anything of your tuck-basket, but I know that Piggy Morton has sent word round to the boys to keep their eyes peeled. There must be more than Piggy can manage single-handed, or they wouldn't be invited."

But Phil and his six chums were already on their way to Piggy's room, before they reached within a few yards of the door they heard the noise of the tea-party, heard the clatter of the cups and saucers, and accompanied by the excited talk of the guests.

"Steady, chaps," cried Phil, mum's the word. "His arms are up, and he looks so dejectedly." As A inspected, it's locked. Get ready to rush in, my bonnie boys.

He tapped upon the panel with his fingers. The door swung open, and he stepped in.

"Who is it?" asked Piggy Morton. "What do you want?"

"I want you, Mr. Morton, sir!" squeaked Phil, in imitation of Martha, the under-housemaid. "I thought perhaps as how you might want a little more hot water, sir."

The tea-party broke up, and the guests, some were for "running no risks," but Piggy was determined to "make it a gorge while we were about it," and he turned the key in the lock.

At that instant Phil and his cronies flew into the room. There they found the guests seated about the table, but the seven tackled them without a moment's hesitation. They couldn't tackle them all at once, however, for the seven were a whippersnapper, and they were there was a chorus of howls. For Phil charged the fat Piggy, who fell back against the table, and the tea-party broke up.

After that the scrap became general. You could see a single boy. They looked like a mob of two-headed, queer-bodied, struggling monsters. Before the fight had been two minutes, the tea-party had cleared the table-top in record time. As he sat down suddenly, he clutched at the tablecloth. It failed to support his weight, and he tumbled down, the guests stones of blubber went down on the floor, every article on the cloth slid towards him.

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"Every boy here shall be punished for his part in this disgraceful scene," said the headmaster, who had been more serious than the other serious business in hand. Faren, followed me to my study."

"I feel awfully sick. His face turned to a ghastly colour, and he reeled slightly. If the master upon which Mr. Radnor wished to speak, he was more serious than the other party disturbance, then it was very bad indeed. Had it to do with the missing purse? Did the master again suspect him? Was this the reason for his being in the master's study? But in a moment the spasm had passed and Phil was himself again. Mr. Radnor, who had been sitting at the desk, was clearly surprised when Phil held himself proudly erect and said fearlessly:

"I'm sorry you were so ready to follow you."

Mr. Radnor gave one more glance round the room, at the broken crockery, at the sheepish faces of the boys, at the general disorder, and then stalked from the room.

"Keep your pecker up, Phil, old son," whispered Arthur Castleton.

But Phil never answered his chum, and with his teeth set hard, and a look of determination in his big, blue eyes, he followed the master.

THE 3rd CHAPTER. Mr. Radnor Finds Out His Mistake.

M R. RADNOR carefully shut the door after Phil, walked to the window, drew up the blind, and looked out.

"What a light shone on the boy's handsome, clear-cut features. 'Unhappy boy,' began the master, 'why did you not inform me sooner that you were and say both of us the pain of this scene? For the sake of your future career rather than for the sake of the school, I should have thought matter should be settled without publicity. You have refused my invitation to come and make a clean breast of it all. But there you are. Will you confess now and save your self disgrace? Will you?"

"Confess?" cried Phil, with a heated face—"confess what? You mean that I have had to confess? Why should I confess? You speak to me as if I were a criminal! How dare you speak to me like that? How dare you have his eyes bled with passion. How dare you speak to me in this way? Were you anyone but the headmaster of this school, I would have your miserable insults down your throat. I would—"

"Unforgivable passion is no excuse," interrupted Mr. Radnor, who was now quite a matter worse. "Do you recognise this?" he continued, drawing a leather purse from his pocket. "You start. I see you do. It is my purse. You found it in your school bag. I also found that the money and the banknotes were taken from it, but in your carelessness you forgot to tell me you had it. You were your guilt. Do you see this knife? Do you see that it bears your initials, P. F., not only engraved on the blade, but also carved on the handle? Do you deny that this knife belongs to you?"

"Phil staggered back and clutched at the table for support. He looked at the knife in his hand. 'It is my knife,' he said, without passion now. 'I lost it over a week ago. But I have had it ever since. How could you have placed my knife inside it in order to accuse me of the theft?'"

"The usual tale," sneered the master; "the tale of an expelled boy. What have you done with the money, unhappy boy? I hear that you have lately been spending money lavishly, and that you have been buying a new coat. He had jumped into the river and swam ashore, I suppose, and started for home."

"Ah, then, of course, he has gone home!" said Phil, looking at the master with a look of relief. "I will write to him at once, and I hope we shall see him back in a few days."

But it was destined to be many long days before the master of Brythwaite School heard anything more of Phil Faren.

"No, sir; he's gone!" "Not there?" echoed the master. "But how can he be gone?" repeated the master again. "But how can he be gone?"

"Why, I suppose he went through the window, sir, for it's wide open," answered Arthur Castleton, who was scattered all around the room, and his—

Mr. Radnor interrupted him in a horrified voice. "The window! It is over the river! Oh, it cannot be that the poor boy has been driven to despair, and—and has drowned himself!"

"It is very gracious of you to say that," said Phil, who was now quite a matter worse, "but he was accused unjustly. It is proper that my apology to him should be equally public."

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THE 4th CHAPTER. Phil Goes On Ahead.

PHIL AVING made up his mind that he could not remain to endure the humiliation of a trial, he decided to run away. The theft which he had not committed, Phil had escaped from his room in the manner described by Arthur Castleton.

He had slipped on his feet, had arranged with Arthur and Tom Rich and Will Henderson, he resolved to take advantage of the idea.

Accordingly, he made a bundle of his clothes, his watch, and his purse, which contained a small remainder of his money, and wrapped them in a waterproof coat, which was to have played a part in that proposed exploit—viz. to run away.

He then raised his window, tossed the bundle into the river, and dived after it. It was only by a narrow escape that he succeeded in getting his bundle for the kitchen and all the house-keeper's rooms were on that side of the house, and as it was a warm day in early June, the water was not so hot as one chanced to be looking out just then, and Master Phil made his leap undisturbed.

He reached his bundle, swam ashore below the house, and speedily got into his clothes, which were a little wet, in spite of the waterproof coat; but still made no account of that.

He then returned to his room, and hid his bundle for the kitchen and all the house-keeper's rooms were on that side of the house, and as it was a warm day in early June, the water was not so hot as one chanced to be looking out just then, and Master Phil made his leap undisturbed.

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letter, addressed to you, I found upon our table. The excitement and curiosity of the class rose to fever-heat as they saw the master break open the letter, suddenly turn pale, and stagger back to his room."

"This is what he read: 'Dear Mr. Radnor,—By the time you open this letter, I shall be far away. I cannot stay at the school any longer. If you look on the top shelf of the right-hand wall of the library you will find all the money and the banknotes that were in your purse. I took your purse and placed Phil Faren's pocket-knife inside it, and I gave myself upon him for playing practical jokes against me. I took your purse, and hid it on your cap and gown, and while the rest of the class were fighting. I also took Phil Faren's tuck-basket. It will teach him not to leave chaps alone and not play jokes against them. As I should have been leaving in a few weeks, I have decided to go at once. I am sorry I took the purse, but it serves Phil Faren right. 'Yours truly,

"WILLIAM MORTON."

"Boys," said Mr. Radnor, after a while, "I have very painful news to tell you. Yesterday I was called to see a boy who had written to me. I believed that I had indubitable evidence that he had taken my purse from my desk. I saw the boy, and he told me that he had learned by a letter from Morton, who had run away from school, that he committed the theft and endeavoured to place it upon Phil Faren's school bag."

Mr. Radnor sank down into his chair and mopped his brow nervously.

"I have had some reason to believe that I was not so fond of mischief this would never have happened; but I need not have been so hasty in condemning him. I hope this will be a lesson to us both."

He then turned to the boys, and said: "I have said again, and the school was very silent. The boys glanced at each other very soberly, and then stalked from the room."

Mr. Radnor, said Castleton softly, "can I have told you something that you want to know?"

"Yes, Arthur, go," replied the master, rising from his seat. "Ask him to come down at once."

Arthur went with flying steps, passing only to take the key of the punishment-room from Hoskyns, the prefect. Mr. Radnor looked at the boys, and said: "I have said again, and the school was very silent. The boys glanced at each other very soberly, and then stalked from the room."

"Boys, it is time for prayers; but you will please keep your seats for a few moments until Faren comes down. He was accused before I was called to see him, and he was accused unjustly. It is proper that my apology to him should be equally public."

"I will write to him at once, and I hope we shall see him back in a few days."

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that he set out with the intention of returning home, but Phil's intentions were not always carried out.

There was many a hard experience of toil and peril in store for him before they saw him in the under-housemaid. He was just in time for the train, and was soon on his way to London.

But now his mind began to be troubled with thoughts of his aunt and uncle—how badly they would feel when he came to explain the reason for his sudden return home.

When they heard what had happened, would they credit his side of the story, or Mr. Radnor's? He thought they would believe him, and yet he wanted to go home and tell them.

Besides, he would be expelled from the school, and he would have to go home and tell them. He would be expelled from the school, and he would have to go home and tell them.

The more he thought of these things the more he wanted to go home, and when the train came into the station he got out in a most uncomfortable frame of feeling, and walked slowly and rapidly advanced in his studies; and to the loving aunt—his second mother—whose tender heart would be wounded so keenly.

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WITH PICK AND LAMP.

THE BOYS' REALM FOOTBALL LEAGUE.

FULL LIST OF CLUBS WHICH HAVE ALREADY BECOME AFFILIATED TO OUR GREAT ORGANISATION.

A Magnificent Tale of Colliery Life.

By DAVID GOODWIN.

CONCLUSION.

Sully Tells the Truth. THEIR was a dead silence in the stall, save for the laboured breathing of the injured man as the two boys and the clergyman knelt by his side.

"I've kept you two young 'uns out of your own to fill my own pockets." His weak eyes fell upon Roddy. "Mad Matt was the rightful owner of half the Coed Coch, by right of his father, Vaughan Matthews. Mad Matt didn't get his rights, because his father had apparently left nothing to show that they were on the property. You thought Vaughan Matthews didn't without leaving any proof behind him. Well, that's where you're wrong."

"Vaughan Matthews did leave proofs—a written contract Kenyon Price had had to give to prove Vaughan legal partner of the whole concern and its profits. Coed Coch and lawyer Kenyon Price thought they were destroyed, but they weren't."

"He asked me about the papers, and I said I'd look 'em up. He said he'd give me a reward if I ought to have given them to him to destroy with his own hands. He'd got a hold over you and on me on that affair."

"My, but he was in a rage! They were meadow to put him in the felon's dock 'n' strip him of all he'd got, now it could be proved that he was innocent, and he was furious! But he had to climb down. He offered me a round sum to give them up, but I wouldn't. He'd have shown him up, and me up while I'd got those papers to hold over him. They made me see."

"Sully's voice grew feebler. "Now I'm going 'll put it right. This gentleman, the doctor, and the witness of my say. You'll find those papers in a cupboard in the middle front room of my house. The cupboard's got a false back in it, which is being open if you press on two knots that you'll see in the wood with apart. Press them both at once, slowly and evenly, and you will see before you a metal case in the cavity beyond, containing the papers. They will prove your right to Coed Coch, as well as the Matthews, without the slightest difficulty."

"Sully spoke so low and haltingly that he could hardly be heard. "You're near to my mother," he said weakly. "I suppose you boys are never likely to forgive me?" "Forgive you?" said Roddy. "Why, yes, an' willing, if it's any comfort to you, an' if the boys took him silently by the hand, and a lump came into Tom's throat. Greatly as he had wronged them, he was paying the penalty now."

The false back to the old cupboard unwound exactly to Sully's description, and worked just as he said it would. The papers were discovered, and would have escaped the scrutiny of the keenest searchers for any length of time, provided they were not told of its secret. Inside was the metal case, and it contained the papers of which Sully had spoken. Mr. Williams spread them out at once on the table, and pronounced them genuine. He set off at once again for his office, accompanied by the boys, and there they made a thorough examination and overhauled the papers.

"It's as plain as a pike-staff," said the lawyer; "these papers prove your right to the Coed Coch beyond the shadow of a doubt, backed by Matt Matthews' will. My congratulations, boys!" He shook hands heartily with the young partners, and was nearly as pleased as they were at the final success. Then his brow grew dark.

"Will you wait for me here awhile?" he said. "There is another matter to attend to, which I must not delay. I shall be back soon." There was a pause after he had gone out, and the boys looked at each other meaningly. "He's gone to let the police know, and arrange for the arrest of Kenyon Price," said Tom.

"That's it, of course. He doesn't want us yet, I suppose. He's acting for us legally. What a tremendous show-up it'll be when Price is brought to trial for the half Vattel's part. Nearly an hour later Mr. Williams returned. The whole matter is in the hands of the police, and the criminal roads have been set of it, and the law must take its course. Are you going back to Bryn y Garth, lad? I'll come up here to-morrow forenoon, and let you know how things go. You'll probably wanted here in Aberford. For the rest, have no fear. You are owners of the Coed Coch Colliery, and of each other meaningly."

"I have extraordinary news for you," he said; "the police acted on my information at once last night. A warrant was made out for Kenyon Price's arrest, and two officers sent to execute it. But when they reached Plas Blyll, the bird had already flown. Not only that, but the police are utterly unable to track him. It is now known that within an hour or less of Sully's death, he had taken with him all the ready cash he could lay hands on—a large sum—quite cleared out. He must have got news of Sully's confession from the pits with astonishing quickness."

"By whom I know of him and his methods," said Roddy. "I'm not surprised at that. Do you mean he's clean escaped, though?" "As far as I know, the police are baffled, and it is believed he got out of the country at once by ship from Cardiff, and now may be anywhere upon the high seas."

"The boys were silent. "I don't know whether I'm sorry or glad," said Roddy, at last. "He did us many a black bad turn, but he's got me out of a tight place. But here we are on top at the finish, and it's poor work kicking a man when he's down. And now, six or seven boys have a celebration banquet, right here, at Bryn y Garth cottage, with Dafydd in the chair, an' we'll be glad if you'll join us."

"I told you," said Tom, with a grin. "you'd get those fees some day. Mr. Williams. We can afford to pay 'em now. Come on, Dafydd, and I'll give you a hand with the grub!" Kenyon Price was never captured, and up to date, at any rate, he has had the good sense not to return of his own accord. The law's decision of his fate is not known, but it is now beyond the writer's knowledge. Roddy and Tom are now the owners of Coed Coch Colliery, and the pits, and the name of being the best-treated colliers in Wales. Finding themselves the proprietors of two huge concerns, they were rather an embarrassment, they held a consultation over the future of Bryn y Garth, and decided to make a free gift of the station for the use of the admiralty. The gift made a great stir, for no finer steam-coal exists in the world, and the Royal Navy is now the greatest practically inexhaustible coal field that ensures his Majesty's ships an unfailing supply of the fuel which they can see from the summit of Bryn Manor Mountain. In gratitude for the gift, a baronetcy was conferred on each of the young partners by the Government. The boys had a legal partner in the Coed Coch, with all third share of its income, which runs well into six figures. Dafydd settled down in a manor house which he bought and squatted, of Bryn, among the grouse and the heather.

SECTION I.—"THE BOYS' REALM" LONDON LEAGUE.

- Division I (North of the Thames). JUNIOR SECTION. St. Saviour's Old Boys (Paddington). St. Paul's F.C. (Fleet Street). Clanton United (Upper Clapton). St. Paul's Athletic Club (Black Hill). St. Michael's Junior (Finsbury). Albert Victoria (Bethnal Green). Lyons Athletic (Clontarf). Grosvenor F.C. (Stepney). SENIOR SECTION. Windsor United F.C. (Shepherd's Bush). Windsor United (Langham Place). Maiden F.C. (Kentish Town).

- Division II (South of the Thames). SENIOR SECTION. St. Jude's (Southwark). St. Andrew's (Hamlet). Silverdale F.C. (Upper Tooting). Collier's Wood Reserves (Tooting). JUNIOR SECTION. Good Templar F.C. (Blackheath). Lily Athletic Club (Lewisham). Chichester Rovers (Deptford). St. Barnabas (Southfields). St. Mary's (Greenwich).

SECTION II.—"THE BOYS' REALM" SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

- (Open to clubs in England and Wales South of a line drawn across the country between Cardiff and Haverston.) SENIOR SECTION. Oxford Abolives (Warrington). St. Mary's Argyle (Southampton). Brighton (Brighton). Victoria Road Institute (Northampton). North Highfields (Luton). West Swinstead E.M.I. (Drimingham). Ferndale F.C. (Luton). Fareham Athletic (Fareham). Wellfield F.C. (Warrington). St. Andrew's (Haverston). Guild Juniors (Warrington). Harefield Athletic (Milton Keynes). St. Andrew's (Warrington). Wolverton Crusaders (Wolverhampton). St. Andrew's (Luton). JUNIOR SECTION. Corinthians F.C. (Chapelton). Lechliffe Athletic (Hanger). Unity Miners (Sheffield). Bertram F.C. (Bradford). Northfield White Miners (Bradford). Penketh Abolives (Warrington). Salem Athletic (Bradford). Nelson Villa (Sheffield). West Leigh United (Leigh). St. Andrew's (Chilton Moor). Colne Church Justice (Colne). Oswald United (Lewes). Blyth St. Peter's (Blyth). Wellfield F.C. (Warrington). Pontefract Colliery (Pontefract). St. Mary's (Chapelton). Corinthians F.C. (Hall). Trinity (Chapelton).

SECTION III.—"THE BOYS' REALM" NORTHERN LEAGUE.

- (Open to clubs in England and Wales North of a line drawn across the country between Cardiff and Haverston.) SENIOR SECTION. St. George's F.C. (Greasley). Iron Rangers (Widnall). Manchester United (Manchester). St. Chad's (Leeds). St. James' (Leeds). Salem Athletic (Newcastle). United Methodist (Manchester). St. Andrew's (Manchester). St. Andrew's (Everton). B.E.M. United (Manchester). Priests' Club (Bradford). Longwood Church (Longwood). St. Andrew's (Manchester). Oldham Boys F.C. (Oldham). St. Mary's F.C. (Southport). JUNIOR SECTION. Corinthians F.C. (Chapelton). Lechliffe Athletic (Hanger). Unity Miners (Sheffield). Bertram F.C. (Bradford). Northfield White Miners (Bradford). Penketh Abolives (Warrington). Salem Athletic (Bradford). Nelson Villa (Sheffield). West Leigh United (Leigh). St. Andrew's (Chilton Moor). Colne Church Justice (Colne). Oswald United (Lewes). Blyth St. Peter's (Blyth). Wellfield F.C. (Warrington). Pontefract Colliery (Pontefract). St. Mary's (Chapelton). Corinthians F.C. (Hall). Trinity (Chapelton).

SECTION IV.—"THE BOYS' REALM" SCOTS LEAGUE.

- JUNIOR SECTION. Moorpark Crusaders (Renfrew). Western Thistle (Glasgow). Rosbank F.C. (Greenock). Hawthorn Villa (Leith). Loughston Thistle (Dunfermline). Glasgow F.C. (Aberdeen). SENIOR SECTION. Grange Albion (Edinburgh). Mayfield F.C. (Glasgow). Goran Thistle (Glasgow). Glenmuir F.C. (Dumfries). 3rd Rutherfordians (Glasgow).

SECTION V.—"THE BOYS' REALM" IRISH LEAGUE.

- JUNIOR SECTION. St. Aloysius (Londonerry). SENIOR SECTION. Dunganston United (Dunganston). Crusaders F.C. (Dublin).

THIS FORM FOR SINGLE UNATTACHED CLUBS ONLY. Date..... Club..... Playing Ground..... Average Age of Members..... Colours..... The above club is desirous of entering THE BOYS' REALM League (Section.....) and members agree to conform to the conditions governing the contest, and to abide by the decision of Your Editor, the Secretary, and a referee in any case of dispute. Secretary's Name..... Address.....

FOOTBALL LEAGUE SECRETARIES READ THIS: Your Editor is prepared to present a Large Number of Solid Silver Challenge Cups to certain Clubs in the Football Leagues throughout the country. Secretaries of Leagues desirous to possess one of these handsome Trophies should make application now. Form of application will be found below.

THIS FORM FOR FOOTBALL LEAGUES ONLY. Name of League..... Year of Formation..... Number of Clubs in League..... Secretary's Name and Address..... This form, together with full particulars of the League, to be addressed to the Secretary, THE BOYS' REALM League, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.

YOUR EDITOR has already promised to present the following Leagues with Solid Silver Trophies:— WORTHING AND DISTRICT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS LEAGUE. Sec., Mr. F. C. Winton, 24, Eastcourt Road, Worthing. STAMFORD HILL AND DISTRICT JUNIOR LEAGUE. Sec., Mr. S. Green, 29, Colrose Road, West Green. MONMOUTHSHIRE JUNIOR ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL LEAGUE. Sec., Mr. F. C. Powell, Temple Cottage, Trodegar. SOUTH LONDON CHURCH OF ENGLAND LEAGUE. Sec., Mr. S. Hanson, The Schools, Creed Place, Greenwich, S.E. CONSETT AND DISTRICT JUNIOR FOOTBALL LEAGUE. Sec., Mr. A. S. Westhorpe, 15, Rosebury Terrace, Consett, R.S.O.

KING CRICKET.

(Continued from the previous page.)

that there was a change, and Geoffrey Lagden knew it, too.

Fortescue, among the amateurs, had always stood up for Lovell. Others now seemed to have come round to Fortescue's way of thinking.

Sneers and innuendoes from Geoffrey Lagden seemed to fall upon Lovell grown strangely deaf to them, and had even shown there is not the slightest doubt that he might have become on intimate friendly terms with nearly all the side.

He did not choose. He was not the kind of man to be picked up in a good humour and dropped again in a bad one.

But he was cordiality itself to those who chose to be cordial to him, while at the same time preserving his independence, and keeping his position well in mind.

And once he had seen the new things had taken the idea of Lovell as county captain crossed Colonel Hilton's thoughts.

All this was as he saw the new things had taken the idea of Lovell as county captain crossed Colonel Hilton's thoughts.

The season was wearing on, and he had had the the the he had hoped to make in county cricket. He had "played the game," and he had to pay the penalty of being unpresentable; but the knowledge of that was comfort to him.

"Geoffrey!" He looked up, none too amiably, at the sound of his father's voice.

He had just walked out of the pavilion on the Home ground, his hands in his pockets and his brow moist. But as his eyes fell upon James Lagden's face his expression changed and deepened.

Here then was the cold, self-contained banker look like that before. James Lagden was pale as death; his lips seemed stiffened with a nervous twitching, and his eyes looked hollow and sleepless.

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"He has left me, and he has taken with him a bundle of important documents." "Ah, I see! He has robbed you?" "Yes."

"Why not? You set the police on his track?" asked Lagden exclaimingly. "Isn't there a clue?" "I have not mentioned the matter to the police."

"The scandal must be brought to look. It will be a good show-up for Kit Valence. The county committee will consider a little. I imagine, about appointing the brother of a man sent to prison for theft."

"I cannot!" "Why not?" "I am not thinking of me, surely? Len Valence will very likely try to disgrace me from revenge, but he has no proof to offer. I should laugh at his allegations. Any statement coming from a man arrested for robbing my father will be laughed at by the public. Never mind what he could say. It will have no effect—after he is arrested. For goodness' sake set the detective on his track at once."

"You don't understand." "No, I don't understand. Why are you thinking of sparing that rascal, papa?" said Geoffrey impatiently. "Explain, then."

"The documents he has stolen are not securities; they have no intrinsic value. They are private papers—letters and records dealing with the affairs of the company in which Arthur Lovell's father lost his fortune."

Geoffrey Lagden started. "But—but what are these papers? What had you to do with Mr. Lovell losing his fortune? Once or twice I have thought that—that the banker gave a hard, merciless laugh."

"That I helped him realise the loss? Well, that is true."

"Yes, Len. I discovered that he was in the right; that you were fully as great a scoundrel as he deemed you."

The scapegrace laughed. Hard words came very lightly to him; he was used to them. And he did not want to quarrel with either his brother or Arthur Lovell now.

"Well, you wrote to me asking me exactly what I could do in this affair of James Lagden and Lovell's uncle. I had readily told you that I could lay my finger on proofs that James Lagden swindled old Mr. Lovell in the most barefaced manner. Lovell refused to have any dealings with me. Does your letter mean that he has changed his mind?"

"I shook his head." "I have not spoken to him about the matter. I wanted to see you first. He is staying to talk with Colonel Hilton, and I came on, as I thought you might be here."

Len Valence nodded with satisfaction. "Good! I would rather not meet him just now. We can settle this between us. Shall we talk here, or shall I come into the house?" "We can talk here very well."

Len laughed again. "Very well. Since I saw you last I have kept my eyes open, though Lovell refused to employ my services. I had an idea of going to his uncle, who after all ought to be interested in the matter, even if he is in bad health. However, here we are. Now, you know, of course, that Mr. Lovell's money was invested in a concern in which James Lagden was also interested?"

"Yes, and he lost fifty thousand pounds in it." "Exactly; every shilling of which went into James Lagden's pocket."

"Easily. There was a rascal named Isaac—"

Lagden discovers that they are gone he will wish that he had destroyed them. "Do you mean that you have taken them?" "Kit drew a deep breath."

"And you have been through them. You are certain that they will prove what you say?" "I know it. Once those papers are published to the world, James Lagden is a ruined and disgraced man."

Len rolled the words over, as it were, on his tongue as if they had a relish for him. James Lagden had been very hard with the scapegrace. It was Len's turn now.

"I will not let you disgrace the Lovell fortune," he went on, "and if he can save himself from prison it will be by only one means—a bullet through his head."

"The papers are in my hands," went on Len. "I intend to make the best terms I can with them. I've no cause to like Arthur Lovell. He has treated me like a dog. As a matter of fact, I'd as soon make terms with the factors, only I fear to deal with that cunning fox of a banker. I have done him this time, because he never feared me; but if I give him a chance he will get the letter of me."

And he had done him. Len snapped his teeth. "He has kept me well under his heel, and never neglected to tread hard if he thought I was anything but a dog. I mean do Lovell! And—and Lovell is a man of his word. If he made a bargain he would stick to it."

"You may be sure of that." "The documents are worth fifty thousand pounds to him—or to his uncle, which is the same as well as nothing to me. Let me tell the Lagdens for the way they have treated him."

Kit's lip curled for a moment in a strange smile. "What do you say, Kit?" "It is not the man to care for revenge upon anybody, repeated Len. "So long as mere justice were done, he would be satisfied. But—"

"You think he will take exception to the way I have become possessed of the documents." "Yes."

"It is folly! The papers are in my hands now. Any detective employed by Lovell will never cover the truth would have done as I did. Here are the proofs of a crime. It is folly to say that it is not justifiable to take them."

Kit nodded. "Perhaps so. I agree with you in part, though not in part. I will speak to Lovell, and see what he says. That's all I can propose."

"Try to make him see reason, then," urged Len. "I have lost a hundred pounds for my share. That is reasonable enough, I think. It is only two per cent. on what I shall recover for my share. I will not quarrel with you on the score of that. If he decides that I am justified in making use of the papers, he will pay your price without cavil."

"That is not for him to decide. I had better talk it over with him before you meet him. I have the papers with you?" "No. They are in a safe place, ready to be produced when wanted. James Lagden must have discovered that his papers are missing—and that I am missing, too—and put two and two together. He is quite capable of doing so, and he will not keep me silent now that I know so much. The world will be astonished when it learns what kind of a man that respectable banking magnate really is."

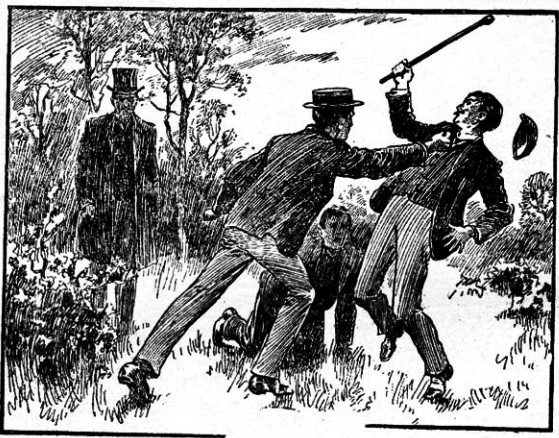
"Quite. He would count my life no more than I count a goat's to secure his safety and the fortune he has made."

"Then you had better take care, for he is down in love. I saw him on the county ground before I was disturbed, and I noticed he was looking at me very distinctly."

"No wonder! Thanks for the warning. I shall take care. When shall I see you again, Kit?" "I will write to you as soon as I have consulted with Lovell."

"You know my address in Brighton, Ta-ta!" The scapegrace lounged away up the lane, his cigarette glowing in the thickening dusk, and Kit Valence entered the garden gate and walked up the path, his brow very thoughtful.

Fortune and a restoration to his old position as the possessor of the garden gate were about to be offered him. More than his old position, for there was no being over the top of that, other difficulties facing the rest of the county captain would again be offered him. And it, under such new circumstances, it were better to be a dog than a man. Why should not accept it, and especially since the marked goodwill which nearly every member of the county had shown him in his hands.



A fierce blow under the ear sent Geoffrey Lagden reeling. The cane crashed to the ground, and Lagden followed.

you were right. I will be frank with you, a desperate effort can save us, and we must work together. If justice were done—the banker's voice sank low—"if justice were done, I should have to restore to Mr. Lovell fifty thousand pounds!"

Geoffrey turned pale. "That would mean—" "Ruin!" "Ruin!" Geoffrey was white to the lips. "Father—ruin. And that is not the worst. If those documents are made public it means worse than ruin; it means disgrace—it means—"

"Good heavens!" "We must find Len Valence; we must induce him to give up the documents—lay them at any price, or take them by force, or we are ruined. That is what I have come to tell you, Geoffrey!"

"The Proofs." "LEN!" Kit Valence uttered the name sharply. The cricket comrades were staying at the house of a friend near Home, and Kit Valence was coming up the lane, after leaving the county cricket ground, when he caught sight of his brother leaning on the gate and smoking a cigarette.

For once the young bowler's face did not darken at the sight of the scapegrace. He knew that it was probably the sister he had himself written to Len that had brought the young ne'er-do-well down to Brighton. Len was evidently in a bad way.

Valence nodded coolly to Kit. He was relieved to see that Arthur Lovell was not with the young bowler. "What is it, Kit? I understood from your letter that you have made it up with him." Kit's brow clouded for a moment.

son who appeared to be prime mover in the affair, and who fled when the crash came, and was supposed to have made away with most of the money. As a matter of fact, this Isaacson was only a tool of another—a sort of dummy, you know, behind whom the real scoundrel worked and carried out his schemes. Isaacson was never more than that. You can guess whom the real rascal was."

"James Lagden?" "Just so." "But the proofs?" "The proof exists in black and white. Letters which passed between Isaacson and Lagden, and documents relating to the concern, containing particulars of its doings, and showing it to have been a rank swindle from end to end, and the work of a rascal who had started to finish—I can lay my finger on them when I choose."

A troubled look came over Kit's face. "You have, then, as Lovell guessed you would, spied on James Lagden and turned his confidence to your advantage, and— Len. I can have no hand in it. I hoped to hear something different. You can't take a hand in a game of that kind. The thing ends here."

Len Valence gave a disagreeable laugh. "Do you think so? My dear brother, you don't know me. I am working for myself first of all, and I have not been working for nothing. As soon as I knew that these documents were in your hands, I determined to possess them."

Kit started. "What have you done?" "They were kept in James Lagden's private safe, to which no one but himself had the key." The rascal grinned. "That baffled me for a time, but only for a time. He kept them in a safe, but I saw the key-hole. I saw the daylight, and they contained proofs of Isaacson's guilt, in case that fellow should ever cut up rusty; but I fancy that when James

Football and How to Play it.

By WILLIAM MCGREGOR (The Father of Football League)

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