

TRADE NOTICE!

THE HARMSWORTH HISTORY OF THE WORLD will be ready on Friday, October 11th. Newsagents and Booksellers wishing a supply of advertising matter should send a postcard to The Publisher, 2, Carmelite House, London, E.C.

The Boys' Realm

of Sport & Adventure.

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A LAD OF THE LEAGUE *By A.S. Hardy*



There was a loud report, and with a cry Morris clapped his left forearm over his eyes, dropping a collapsed mass of leather and rubber to the ground. The ball had burst!

CONCLUSION.

KING CRICKET.

A Fascinating Story of County Cricket Specially Written for THE BOYS' REALM by One of Our Most Popular Authors.

A Fight to a Finish.

THE fourth day of the great struggle had dawned. Again bright weather favoured the cricketers, a gay sun shining down upon the Oval, and again a vast crowd had gathered to see the final struggle between the champion county and the national team.

It was the last day, and it was to see Loamshire's last innings, and the final attempt of the sturdy cricketers to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

In the crammed pavilion Molly Hilton could be seen, with Blane and the colonel and Harding, who had once captained Loamshire. Arthur Lovell's uncle, too, was there, to see his nephew play in the finish of the great match. Old Mr. Lovell, greatly improved in health now, was chatting with Molly and looking on eagerly. His face glowed with pride as he saw the tall, athletic figure of his nephew go down to the wicket.

The England fieldsmen were in their place, and Blythe ceased bowling trial balls to the wicket-keeper as the Loamshire batsmen appeared. He gripped the round red ball in his hand and prepared for business.

Arthur Lovell dropped the end of his bat on the crease, and stood ready. He was looking very fit and handsome, and keenly on the alert. The first ball came down amid a buzz of close-drawn breath.

Clack! sounded the bat on the leather. The ball flew away, and the batsmen were running, and running again. The innings opened with a 2 for Arthur Lovell, an earnest of what was to come.

He faced that over, and many more, with coolness and a certain confidence in his manner—a confidence that was fully justified. For the bowlers were quite unable to touch him.

Blythe, Knox, and Hirst tried their hardest, but the harder they tried, the more certain were Lovell's steady swipes, and each drive of the bat brought him 1, or 2, or 3, or 4.

Never had Arthur Lovell batted so splendidly before.

Once, indeed, he had lived through an entire innings, from start to finish, but that was against an England team. Now he was excelling himself. In forty-five minutes he had topped the century, and the crowd yelled approval.

The other bats did well, better than in the first innings. Each put on an average number of runs ere he fell to the deadly bowling of the enemy. Deadly, indeed, the bowling was, and hard to face, and, all things considered, the Loamshire batsmen did very well against it. But the most brilliant of all was the batting of Arthur Lovell.

Loamshire were five down for 260 at lunch, and of that 260, 180 belonged to the captain of the county side.

After the luncheon interval, when the game was resumed, two Loamshire wickets fell in quick succession to Knox, who was more dangerous than ever. But a few minutes later Arthur Lovell completed his second century.

Three hundred for seven wickets. Three more wickets to fall, and 121 wanted to win. Loamshire's hopes were rising. Arthur Lovell, showing scarcely a sign of fatigue, was still batting, and apparently meant to make a whole innings of it, as he had done once before. Could he do it against an England team? If so, there could be no doubt

as to whom the title of the greatest batsman of the year was due.

He was still batting, and the score was creeping up. His figures were getting on towards the third century, and the crowd was almost breathless with interest. There was nothing slow about the Loamshire cricket. Arthur Lovell meant to either win or lose the game. The idea of a dragged-out draw had no attractions for him.

The Loamshire men played up for all they were worth, but the "Rest" fielded and bowled well, and during the hot afternoon runs came in more slowly.

The eighth wicket went down with the score at 330, and the ninth when the Loamshire total stood at 350, with 71 runs required to win.

Seventy-one required to win, and exactly half an hour remaining to play!

The long, hard struggle was drawing to its close, and the finish was likely to be more keen and exciting than any previous phase of the great game.

"Last man in!" Kit Valance came out of the pavilion with his bat under his arm. Arthur Lovell had foreseen all, and he had wanted to have his chum to back him up at the finish, and so Kit had been left for last man.

He exchanged a look with Lovell as he came to the wicket, and then he took up his position. It was the last throw of the dice for Loamshire, and interest was breathless in the immense crowd as Blythe went on to bowl again.

He bowled to Kit Valance, and each ball was stopped with methodical regularity. The over was a maiden one, Kit risking nothing. It was the best he could do to back up Arthur Lovell; but time was precious now, and only twenty-four minutes remained in which to get the required 71.

Now Arthur Lovell was batting again. 2, and 2, and 4, and 4 again, and 2, and another 4! Eighteen for the over, and now only 53 required to win.

Blythe bowled to Kit Valance's wicket, and Kit, seeing his chance, ran a single, which brought Arthur Lovell to the batting end, and gave him the rest of the bowling.

It was a chance that Arthur made the most of. He proceeded to punish the Kentishman's bowling in the finest style. Boundary followed boundary, and when the over concluded, Loamshire wanted only 32 to win! And Arthur Lovell had topped his third century!

Fifteen minutes more to play, and 32 runs wanted. Were Loamshire, after maintaining the struggle so gallantly right up to the finish, to lose the fruits of the brave struggle to the behest of Father Time?

Not if Arthur Lovell could help it. Kit Valance was batting again, and again a single gave Lovell the bowling. Ten for the over for Arthur Lovell.

Six more minutes of play. The excitement was breathless now. Would Loamshire do it—could they do it?

Three to Kit Valance, from the bowling of Hirst. Eighteen more wanted, and four minutes to get them in!

Hirst was bowling to Lovell now, and Lovell's face was set, his eyes gleaming. He knew that this must be the last over—that if he did not win now, there would be no time to win.

Clack! Away soared the ball, and away, and the batsmen ran 4 before it came in.

A boundary followed, and then another. The fieldsmen played up well; there was no hint of a desire to draw out the game. If Loamshire could win, they should win! Two more balls to the over, and 6 runs wanted. Clack! goes the bat again, and the batsmen are running—once, twice! Whiz comes the ball, not to the wicket-keeper but to Lovell's wicket, and there is a crash of falling stumps. But the bat has clumped on the crease in time, and the umpire shakes his head. Not out!

The crowd breathes again. Hirst is preparing to send down the last ball for England. He is not slow, but to the eager, impatient crowd he seems so.

But the ball has gone down, and the flashing bat has swept to meet it. Away it goes—and away—and away. Kit Valance starts from the crease, but Arthur waves him back with a smile.

"No need to run, Kit." No need, certainly, for that last hit was a boundary. And the game was saved—saved on the stroke of time!

Loamshire had beaten the Rest of England! The next minute the level green is black with a swaying, roaring crowd. Arthur Lovell is swept to the pavilion. His comrades are round him, cheering, hand-shaking, breathless with excitement and delight. It is the hour of Loamshire's triumph, and Arthur Lovell's. But sweetest of all to him is the joyous smile of Molly Hilton, the tender pressure of her hand.

And in this, the brightest hour of Arthur Lovell's life, we end our tale of the grand old game, and say farewell to King Cricket.

THE END.



The First Chapters Briefly Told.

The theft of a purse containing a large sum of money from the desk of Mr. Radnor, the headmaster of Brythwaite Classical School, causes much commotion and discussion amongst the pupils of the same. Suspicion falls upon Phil Farren, and he is accused of the theft by Mr. Radnor, and confined in the punishment chamber. A few hours later the headmaster is greatly shocked to hear of the disappearance of an inmate of the school, William Morton, who leaves behind him a note confessing to the crime. Upon one of the boys going to acquaint Phil Farren of the turn of affairs, it is discovered that he has escaped through the window of the punishment chamber and vanished.

Plucky Phil journeys to London, and makes his way to the docks with the intention of getting a berth aboard some outward-bound vessel leaving for the Colonies.

Strange happenings lead to his getting a job aboard the sailing-ship Arethusia. He tells his story to the captain, who treats him with kind consideration. At Natal Phil leaves the Arethusia and, attracted by graphic descriptions of the Dark Hill mines, decides to journey there and make his fortune gold-hunting, little reckoning with the trials and troubles which await him there.

Phil makes friends with a lad named Bob Spencer, and they become firm chums. They agree to be partners at the mines, and join an expedition which starts the following day. On the way Phil is stricken down with fever, and he and Bob are obliged to remain in a lonely cabin, while the rest of the party continue their journey.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

The Mad Miner of Rapid Creek.

THE next day Bob got the loan of an old hand-cart, on which he placed Phil, and pluckily wheeled him to where the doctor lived. Spring Creek was not much of a place for gold, but a few miners still held out there, and a rather dissolute person, who was, however, an educated man, known as "Doctor" Sam, resided there. He was very kind to Phil, and insisted on having him in his own house, so that he might give him full attention. Phil was in need of it, also of Bob's nursing. After four days he felt the benefit of the care he received.

He got better, but was still very weak. Nevertheless, he wanted to go on, for time was precious to both boys.

"We want to make our fortunes, doctor," he said.

And the doctor smiled in a quiet way that was not exactly encouraging.

"I hope you will," was all he said, "and when you've done it come back and pay me."

They could not induce him to take anything in the way of payment, and he insisted on giving them some medicine from a handsome brass-bound chest, strangely at variance with the rest of the furniture of the place. He also possessed a gold watch, which he wore, and shyly told the boys it was a relic of his "early days."

The boys went on, getting a lift in a waggon that was going to Rapid Creek, where they were told they could get some work to do helping the miners, who would pay them handsomely. This, of course, they did not intend to do, for they purposed working themselves for the fortune of which Phil dreamt so much, and which was as yet far, far away.

Kelly, deprived of the services of Bob, as we said, went on alone. Under the circumstances he would not grumble, but passing through Rapid Creek he must have spoken of the boys, for on their arrival there they were received by one, James Bliss, who welcomed them in the name of the sparse community.

"Some people have lost heart in this place," he said. "I haven't, and I don't see why I should. It isn't paradise, however."

Phil was still very weak, and to work at gold-digging—for a few days, at least—was out of the question. He wanted to do it, but Bob said "No."

"You've got to rest," he said.

There were only about forty miners in the place, and huts for a hundred, many of the latter being deserted by those who had not found Rapid Creek pay. Jake Bliss told the boys they could pick and choose any out of them, and they selected one which, in the rough way of the country, was fairly well finished.

"Now, the first thing for me to do is to make up your bed," said Bob, "and there you'll be until I tell you to get up again."

Phil had ten days rest, during which Bob had a look round. He did not think much of Rapid Creek, but thought it was "better'n nothing."

"Anyway," he said, "there's some of the men here going prospecting to-morrow, and I

Plucky Phil Farren

A Marvellous New Tale of Peril and Adventure.

BY A POPULAR AUTHOR.

mean to go with 'em. I shall soon tell if we are getting on the tracks of a gold country or not."

On the morrow Phil was well enough to get up and dress, so that he could see his friend off with the exploring party, which consisted of half a dozen sturdy miners.

The rest of the community saw them off, giving them a parting cheer, and then went to work. Phil had a very quiet day all to himself, just moving about, and in the afternoon, feeling tired, lay down in his bunk to have a nap. He soon fell asleep, but not for long. He was awakened by the bursting open of the door, and, starting up, he beheld a wild, haggard-faced man staring about the place. He was of the miner class, but seemed to have recently been ill, and, without a doubt, he was mad. This unexpected apparition naturally gave Phil a bit of a shaking, and he had not the nerve for the moment to get out of his bunk.

"Gold—gold!" cried the madman. "I must have it!"

He glared around the hut again, and at last his eyes encountered Phil.

"Give it up!" shouted the madman, fixing his eyes, with their crazy, covetous glare, upon Phil's bright, shining curls. "I want that gold upon your head! I want it! It all belongs to me!"

And he stretched out his hands as if to clutch the fancied treasure. Phil shrank back with a shudder, but he had sense enough to conceal his alarm and face the maniac with as bold a front as he could assume.

"It is not gold," he said in a steady voice.

"You are mistaken. It is nothing but hair!" "It is gold, I say!" the mad miner shrieked.

"Look how it shines!"

Phil answered as calmly as he could:

"That is only the sunshine. There is no gold about it."

"Ha, ha, ha! I've heard that before!" cried the other, laughing wildly. "All is not gold that glitters, they tell me; but I know better. You can't cheat me with that story. It is gold, and I will have it! I tell you I will have it! I'll have it!"

Those wild eyes glared upon him, and the clawlike fingers snatched at his hair. He could no longer keep up his pretence of coolness.

Dodging out of the way, he suddenly caught up the blanket on which he had been lying and thrust it in the maniac's face, muffling his head and hands for a moment. Such an unexpected mode of attack caused the fellow to fall back a pace, and Phil darted towards the door. But the lunatic was too quick for him. Getting rid of the muffling blanket, he was after the boy in an instant, and caught him before he reached the door.

Phil struggled to free himself, and shouted for help, though he had little hope that anyone would hear, for it was not yet time for the miners to come from their work. He struggled without avail, for he was as helpless as an infant in the grasp of the madman, whose fingers were twisted in his curly hair, and whose eyes seemed to glitter with a wilder frenzy as he gave vent to his triumph in a maniacal yell.

"Ho, ho! Did you think you would escape and carry off the gold? I tell you I mean to have it, if I take your head with it!"

"He will kill me!" thought Phil, with a thrill. "Oh, I wish Bob would come! Bob—Bob!"

He called Bob's name instinctively, and without any thought that his friend was near, but his cry was echoed by a startled shout in Bob's own voice.

"Yes, I am here. What is the matter, Phil?"

And with a crash of heavy footsteps Bob rushed in, saw what the matter was, and hurled himself upon the madman like a young avalanche. The maniac instantly let go his hold of Phil and turned to grapple the new-comer. But when he beheld the tall, vigorous form of the lad who confronted him, he retreated, seeing, with that sort of wary shrewdness which sometimes distinguishes the insane, that Bob would be a match for him. Uttering a howl of fury, he ran out of the cabin and dashed off down the creek.

"Phil, are you hurt?" inquired Bob anxiously. "What was he after, anyhow? What'd he want to touch you for?"

"Why, he wanted to steal my hair!" replied Phil, laughing.

Football and How to Play it.

By WILLIAM MCGREGOR (The Father of Football League).

The above valuable addition to football literature has just been published, and is the first volume in a new series of books on sport, entitled "The Burleigh Sports Library."

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