

The Boys' Realm

of Sport and Adventure.



No. 297. Vol. VI.]

EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY.

[SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1908.

Fred Reckless: Amateur.

A Powerful New Athletic Serial. - - By JACK NORTH.

(Synopsis of Opening Chapters will be found at the foot of the next page.)

The Match with Crossop.

HERE was not a player on the Excelsior side who did not resent the leaving out of John Warman from the team. Some of the more hot-headed among them made schemes for showing their resentment—pretty wild schemes, for the most part. The soberest proposal was one for a joint protest to the selection committee. But the wisest heads—Mr. Raynton, Fred Reckless, George Raikes, and John himself—would not agree even to this.

"They've got a good excuse for it," said Warman. "I did come jolly near losin' you the match, you know."

"And it would be hardly fair to Darnall," added Fred. "It would look like a dead set made against him. There are some of the new men who don't by any means love us now. We mustn't give them a chance of sayin' that they haven't had fair play."

There was, indeed, a good deal of feeling against the old members of the team on the part of a majority of the newly-engaged men, of whom Darnall was one. As has already been mentioned, not one of these was a well-known player, though all were considered to possess considerable promise. But, to judge from their grumbling, one might have thought that they were cranks from Eston House, or Tyneside United, at least.

"They hadn't come to Bramblech to play second fiddle to a lot of local jossers," said Bingham, the centre-forward of the reserves, a fellow from a small Northweshire club, who served to supplant Fred Reckless. "Let 'em put the local chaps into the reserves. It's we who ought to play in the first team."

In this way they formed a hostile camp, with Bingham as their leader, and Darnall as his lieutenant. The Excelsior lads still used their old clubhouse, but only two of the new ones—Wallace, the reserves' goalkeeper, and McCoy, a half-back—ever entered its doors. These two stood somewhat aloof from the cabal, the others had formed. They were fellows of superior rearing and better brains than the rest, and both were test-tubers, and did not care to join with the rest in making the Pig and Partridge—which stood near the ground, and was booming strongly—their headquarters.

Not that the new men from the distance were likely to take any harm at the Pig and Partridge if James Rolis, the landlord, could prevent it. Rolis was an enthusiastic supporter of the club, and a man whom everyone whose opinion was worth having respected. A publican of the right type can be a powerful agent for good, since public-houses there must be, and Rolis was emphatically of the right type. He was zealous for the good name of his house. Habitual drunkards and other undesirable characters were never allowed to get a footing there, and if he had been entitled to leave it to keep the new Excelsior men in good order he could not have done more.

"I don't like Darnall," said Chesworthy, who did not lose his natural frank outspokenness in studying for the legal profession. Mr. David Deedes had said him more than once that he would be a solicitor before he would have to learn to keep his tongue behind his teeth. Not that Chesworthy divulged office

(Continued on the next page.)



THE SCHOOL STORY STARTS TO-DAY.

"This is rough luck, Fred. We shall have it bang in our faces."
And the mayor's look of pleasure died away...

THE 11th CHAPTER.

W HEN Fred kicked off for the home team after half-time, very few people on the ground doubted that, in spite of the wind, the Excelsiors would win.

There seemed, indeed, little room for doubt. That they were the better of all was clear from anything about the game could be. They had far more than their share of the play. They were performing at home before an enthusiastic crowd; and that is always a big advantage.

Most of those present settled themselves down comfortably in the conviction of a win by at least three to one. They felt some suspense, indeed, but that was only until the goal that should put Branchurch ahead was scored. After that...

But on a sudden all their confidence was dashed to the ground. Collar pulled up Fred and sent the ball spinning down the field. The wind carried it right to Morrell, chest-high. He breathed it, and letting it run down his body he right leg to the toes, or so it seemed to those who were, was off in an instant.

Ban Ankerding tackled gamely, but was pushed. Telfer rushed at Morrell, tapped the leather neatly to Bob Jobson, slipped past Telfer, and received again from his inside-right, who had gone ahead so far that he was on-side.

Some of the spectators did not understand these tactics, and there was a yell of "Off-side!"
But the referee took no notice. When Morrell had passed to Jobson the two backs...

Jonathan Cox was among the shouters, naturally. "Ox much did they pay yer, referee? Gerway 'ome an' learn the rules, do! Or'n't yer know off-side when yer see it? Don't yer say so at all—"

"There's that rasnal Cox on the ground again!" said the mayor. "I cannot think why the gentlemen do not give him a little more admittance. I shall have to send someone to put him out."

position that Warman ought not to be played that week. It was Bynoe who had advocated the giving Darnall a trial, and Warren who had backed him up eagerly. Archbell had said very little; yet in reality he had been at the bottom of it all.

"I say, chap, 'ow did 'o do it! Tell me, somebody. I don't understand it. I feel like as if I was dreamin'." "Ow did 'o do it, tell me that."

"Ye've 'ad too much beer, Jonathan, that's the long an' short of it," said Cox's friend Halkett, who stood by his side. "Ex yer could see very well. Ex jest opened of 'is legs, perille like, an' let 'o'er chap slip the ball 'tween them. Never see nothink neater, in a way; but by blazes, if I was a near 'im, I'd swear the beggar for!"

"Let's go for 'im. Come along, Halkett! I'm game!"
"Not now, yer fool! But just yer wait. If 'e lets us down agen, it'll be a pretty bad thing for Mister Darnall, so I tell yer straight."

Halkett, a brawny, powerful fellow, with a savage face, was even more ferocious than Cox, for he was not the worse for drink, whereas Cox's threats were as much the liquor talking as anything.

Even now the spectators did not give up hope. They remembered that there was quite a long period in the first half of the game when the Excelsiors forwards had pressed continuously, and Darnall had had no opportunity to display his ineptitude. The same thing might well happen again.

It did. But not though the attack of the Branchurch front line was, and cleverly as the halves backed it up, sending the ball in again whenever it came out of the stern scrimmage.

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It was marvellous how the home team, with that high wind against them, pinned the visitors in so completely.
But to all who thoughtfully understood the game, it was obvious that the wind alone was certain sooner or later to give the Crossop an opportunity of breaking away. And some notified that Morrell was not taking any very active part in the defence. The other forwards had dropped back; but he hung about the ground. Morrell was after it like an antelope; and after him went the Branchurch halves. But he gained on them with every stride.

Telfer had rushed forward; and the eyes of all were on the two as they closed in on the ball, which had reached the ground now and was rolling gently along, on its own, as it were.

Who would get it first? Morrell was a couple of yards nearer; but the sphere was moving away from him and towards the back. Ah, he had it, thought just a yard ahead of Telfer, he reached it, and tapped it to his right, and sprang after it, and was away down the field again for all he was worth.

Fred was putting into it every ounce of energy. His feet seemed almost to skim the ground. Even those who knew best the pace of which he was capable wondered at his own speed.
But a stern chase is a long chase. Morrell had a start, and was himself possessed of a very useful turn of speed. Could Fred possibly reach him in time?

There was Darnall in the way. With help coming up, Darnall ought to have been able to check the career of the ball, at least, and give his comrades a chance of dispossessing him.
But—and small wonder—Morrell thought himself able to laugh at the best the Branchurch left back could do.

Darnall charged at him. Morrell swerved, and swept on.
Then Darnall wheeled round and ran his chance of stopping the forward. Otherwise, his action would have been justified. Many a good man has done it before.

But Morrell was not to be deterred. "I know your theory—save a goal and chance a goal, from the penalty! But you'll call a foul on me if I'm not in the game, air—it's not the game!"
Bynoe would have continued the argument; but he broke in with: "I say, I hope Morrell isn't hurt!"

But Morrell was hurt. That was very evident from the way he staggered when he lifted his head. The Crossop trainer was hurrying across, with a flask under his arm and a bandage in his hand.

Morrell's head hung limp. He breathed heavily and with difficulty. He had fallen on the top of his skull, with an awful jar to his spine, and he was in a bad way.

The referee turned, his eyes flashing angrily, and spoke to Darnall. Then the left-back, by a fallow face and wicked, walked towards the dressing-room.
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Ordered off the field! An utter failure as a player; he had in all probability lost his place in the match. He had certainly disgraced it. And now he was ordered off!

But that was the end of all his high hopes. That was the end of the game. In fact, Morrell's head hung limp. He breathed heavily and with difficulty.

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Then into the press drove a strong, tall figure, and John Warman, striking out right and left, scattered the crowd of roughs for a moment and besting the body of Darnall.

that went on in the penalty area, no goal scored.
For the Crossop men had packed their goal now, and were putting into play every device they could think of to keep the lead they had gained. Frequently they kicked into touch; and with the wind blowing strongly at their backs, the neighbourhood of the house behind, too, Chesworthy and Hills were both wonderfully good at corner-kicks; but the wind was too violent and gusty for much danger to be feared from them to-day; and every time a corner-kick had to be taken valuable time was wasted.

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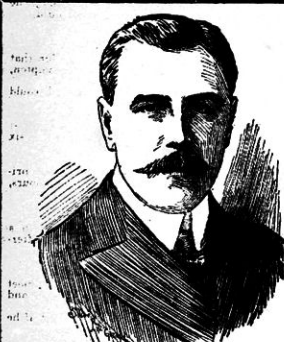
hardest. Whatever his failings as a player, the fellow had pace.
He gained on Morrell. And now Fred overhauled him. And now flying forward and pursuers alike were within the penalty area; and Philip Raynton waited, his eyes glued to the ball, feet, hands, body, all ready for instant action.

"Take him on the right!" cried Fred, himself making for Morrell's left. If he and Darnall could thus hem in the Crossop man, it might not be difficult for them either to bring him to a standstill and rob him of the ball, or to make him shoot while still far enough from the goal to give the watchful custodian every chance.

Another stride, and Fred would be close on Morrell's heels, that would enable him to tackle Morrell fairly. But just then, Darnall charged with all his force right into the back of the white-clothed figure, and sent him crashing to ground face foremost, uttering a low cry of pain and amazement as he fell.

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FROM YOUR EDITOR'S CHAIR.



Latest Portrait of YOUR EDITOR (H. E.), Controller of THE BOYS' REALM—Saturday, THE BOYS' FRIEND—Tuesday, THE BOYS' HERALD—Wednesday.

Our New School Story.

In this issue our opening chapters of our enthralling new school story are presented to my readers. I have been at great pains to secure this...

Next week I shall publish the opening chapters of yet another new serial, this time from the pen of Mr. Max Hamilton. I have spoken to my friends for a long time...

How to Make Theatrical Wigs.

A VERY great difficulty with boys who go in for amateur theatricals is for obtaining the necessary wigs. However, in the issue of my companion paper, 'The Boys' Herald'...

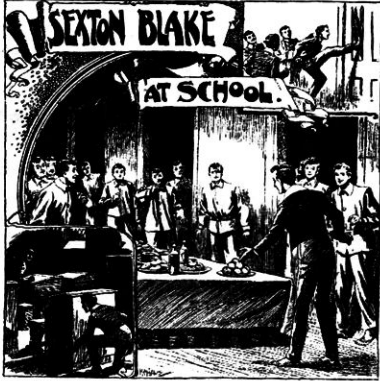
He Wants to Grow Tall.

A BRADFORD reader, whose initials are W. E. H., puts to me two questions. The first is a very usual one, being: 'How can I grow taller?' The second one is, I must say, rather unusual, and is: 'How can I get fat?'

Now bend from the hips until you touch your toes, keeping the knees perfectly stiff. The only way in which my friend can become fat is by eating good, wholesome food...

A Cure for Stammering.

STAMMERING is a very distressing complaint, from which I am very sorry to say, a great number of boys suffer. It is needless for me to point out the difficulties under which a person labouring when he stammers, so I will at once give a possible cure for the stammering of my friend H. B., who writes to me from Beaton, Leeds.



This ripping story is just starting in my companion paper, 'The Boys' Herald.' Start reading it now.

In the case of the stammerer, however, the uvula rises excessively long, it is only lifted a very little way from the glottis, and is then lowered with a trembling motion. This trembling is caused by the uvula vibrating. For, as the uvula trembles, or, in other words, is rapidly raised and lowered, the passage of sound is alternately opened and closed.

OUR LEAGUE CORNER.

Secretaries of Junior Leagues are invited to send in interesting items of news, etc., for publication in these columns, which will be reserved for them in future.

Table with columns for League Name, P, W, L, D, F, A, Pts. Includes North Staffs Church League, Finsbury Park and District League, Stoke Newington, etc.

Table with columns for League Name, P, W, L, D, F, A, Pts. Includes Anfield Plain Minor League, Portsmouth and District Ladies, Senior Division, etc.

"THE BOYS' REALM" NORTH LONDON LEAGUE.

Table with columns for League Name, P, W, L, D, F, A, Pts. Includes St. Martin's Juniors, Upper Chelsea F.C., St. Paul's F.C., etc.

"THE BOYS' REALM" SOUTH LONDON LEAGUE.

Table with columns for League Name, P, W, L, D, F, A, Pts. Includes Norwood Juniors, Stoke Newington Avondale, etc.

SENIOR.

Table with columns for Club Name, P, W, L, D, F, A, Pts. Includes St. Mary's Church F.C., Claverton, etc.

ODON JUVENILE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION.

Table with columns for Club Name, P, W, L, D, F, A, Pts. Includes 2nd Glenmore, Thursday, etc.

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found that Phil had lost no time in commencing a frontal attack upon the big bun that lay nearest to her.

"Unhappened, have you, you young puss" inquired he.

"Phil's eyes answered the question; his mouth was not at that moment as wide as a speech, and he had not so much as raised a finger in need of food, and still more of rest and warmth."

"When David and his sister again stepped into Westminster Street, he could not quite decide whether it was commencing to rain, or just leaving off; but, taking Phil by the hand, he decided to venture on his way."

"The darkness, the silence, save for the patter- ing swirl of the rain upon the roof, the rattling of the wind and driving rain."

A Friend In Need.

"It was very nearly half-past four. In the lower end of Temple Avenue there was a lower end of Temple Avenue there was this was all too small to dissipate the deep shadows cast by the tall buildings."

"Hallo! Who are you?" he exclaimed. He was halted by a rough form from the step-

"The feeling was but momentary. His young brain worked rapidly. A plan shot into his mind. His captor was the night, or so he had expected—but a mere slip of a boy."

"For a moment he was crushed by the apparent futility of attempting any longer to struggle with his fate."

"All this passed through the boy's mind in a twinkling of an eye. His plan was a forlorn hope, but on the instant he acted upon the resolution he had formed."

"David braced himself up; and by a sudden and sudden movement he caught the man's arm, made a clutch at him, but the boy ducked to avoid it, as he shot out of reach."

lettering upon it, and underneath the coat was a scarlet jersey. David heaved a huge sigh of relief as he murmured to himself:

"What have you done wrong that you should fear the police?" The voice was not unkind, there was certainly a tinge of suspicion in it.

"Nothing, sir! Really, I haven't! Only—only what?" interrogated the officer.

"I have no father," he faltered, "and mother has been taken to the hospital, sir. The land-lord turned me out." This last was not quite an accurate representation of the fact, but it would convey understanding to the man better.

"How old are you, sir?" "Well, come on!" said the officer. "We will go to her, and then we will see what the police have to say to your landlady."

"Mother would fret if Phyllis were taken to the police-station. I think it would break her heart."

"In the corner of the doorway, little Phil lay fast asleep. She was quite dry, for though she had been deprived of her shoes and stockings by the rain during the few minutes that she had been more exposed."

"I don't know, sir. It wouldn't have been so bad if it had happened in the daytime."

"What is he doing?" asked the school headmaster. "He is another young man."

"I don't know, sir. It wouldn't have been so bad if it had happened in the daytime."

"Where are you going, sir?" asked David, pausing temporarily in his step.

"They turned on to the Embankment, and David's step was little less brisk than that of his mother."

"The rain had ceased, but the air was filled with reeking moisture, and there was a bite in the wind."

"By the time they passed down Charing Cross Bridge at Northumberland Avenue, the boy was obviously in difficulties."

"David cast a hurried glance up the steps that led to the road above, and there still lay the faded figures that had so affronted him when he attempted to pass down that way."

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dated dial looked down upon them from the looming mass of its immense tower. David, however, did not see it; he had not the energy to lift his gaze so high."

"At the corner of a large building stood a knot of men. Two were evidently gentlemen, the other two were men of no special rank or guide; one was a workman, in blue overalls; and the fourth might have been a Covent Garden porter, stove-dove, or any other similar occupation."

"Hullo, lieutenant! Loaded up, ain't you? Been robbing an orphanage? His three com- pany fellows were laughing and jeering."

"Ah, just so. Best thing for them, poor little!" The boy noted the sympathy in the tones, and even though he was half-fazed he felt quite grateful to the stranger."

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The lieutenant felt the increasing drag upon his coat, and gathered that the lad was almost gone. He raised Phyllis into an upright posture in his arms, so that he could get his brother a hand. The change of position woke the little girl up, but he could not avoid it.

"Hold up! Steady!" The man slipped his arm round the child, and receiving not so much as his total collapse. And thus it was that three minutes later they stood in front of the severely injured Phyllis, the mother and her brother, a mass of souls, weighed down by weight of woe, sick and sore from long contending with adversity."

"Phyllis was sufficiently wide awake to recognise niece that she was in the arms of a stranger. She looked down at David as if in pitious interrogation, and receiving not so much as a glance from him, burst into tears."

"Hush, little woman! You'll be all right in a moment, said the man soothingly, as he lifted the boy by the side of the big girl, and the child was comforted by some quality in the voice that appealed to her childish instincts."

"A wicket opened almost immediately, and an old man appeared." "I won't come inside," he said, "we are a-gone in your car, so that fall up there at round to swing a cat round, and you must go and gather in a couple of 'babbits'."

"The old man sprang to his aid almost ere the bidding was completed. He lifted David up, and passed forward a few paces before turning up a couple of steps before him. With his unconscious burden in his arms, the man stood in an apartment only some twenty feet by ten. The lieutenant sat at the door to give further instructions."

"I won't come inside," he said, "we are a-gone in your car, so that fall up there at round to swing a cat round, and you must go and gather in a couple of 'babbits'."

"The room into which David had been carried was the smallest courtyard in the Shelter and Rescue Home. It was one where the officials placed the more select of the unfortunate being struck by the Salvation Army, and ready to extend a friendly hand, whether it be by day or by night. In other bigger dormitories at that moment were four hundred and fifty inmates, the Rotman and Jetman of the greatest city in the sun ever stoned upon, the very dragons of humanity."

"In a far corner up against the wall was a little iron camp bedstead, with a mattress and blanket and sheets. The old man lowered David from his arms and placed him upon the bed, he slipped off his jacket, after he had ascertained that it was soaked with moisture, and then he took off his boots. He laid the boy down on full length, drew the covers over him, and then quietly left the room."

(To be continued next week, when a powerful new stage story commences. Order your copy now.

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A Trained Amateur.

A Story of the West London Football Club. By A. S. HARDY.

THE 1st CHAPTER. A Motor Ride—The Snow Fight—At the King's Hotel.

FOUR miles around Hagglegstone the country lay buried beneath a heavy fall of snow. The white mantle lay inches deep upon the highways, and upon the exposed portions of the fields; but in the hollows, and protected places it was not a question of inches but of feet.

There was a bitter northeasterly wind blowing, too, which made travelling other than on foot decidedly unpleasant. A seemingly unending mass of purple clouds raced by overhead. They were surcharged with moisture, and it was evident that grim Winter intended to hold the country in his grip for some days yet.

One would have thought that, under the circumstances, all excepting those who were obliged to journey abroad would remain snugly shut behind their doors, screened by kindly walls from the violence of the wind; or, if they intended to travel, that they would confine their travelling to the railways.

And yet, on the morning after the heavy fall—Saturday morning—a motor-car of high power, magnificently enamelled and fitted, driven by its solitary occupant, flashed onward, over the yielding surface of the snow, towards the direction of Hagglegstone.

The faster the man drove, the colder the conditions became, and yet this man whirled off like a bullet, and was possessed by a veritable fury. The snow spun from the crushing forewheels in a misty shower. It was dashed into his face, and yet the keen, eager eyes gazed relentlessly through the glasses of the goggles, and the car went on.

The driver's monocle was frozen white. Rime had settled upon his cap, his coat, his hair, the leather rug that had been tucked tightly about his legs, enclosing a hot water bottle that he had recently had filled with boiling water at an inn en route.

A heavy frieze overcoat, with deep collar and throat protector, even with its heavy lining of leather, could not keep the driver warm, and yet, despite his physical agony—which was acute at times—he drove recklessly onward, until a rise, terminating in the summit of a dangerous hill, disclosed the big, industrial town of Hagglegstone to his view.

Here it lay with its countless smokestacks and factory chimneys; its countless acres of slate roofs, now covered with snow, and its bare, bare church spires, offering to embrace him and his car, as it were, as he rushed it at break-neck pace down the hill.

The man would have appeared mad to the average onlooker, had the snow him literally hurl his car over the frozen surface of the snow-bound hill, where only two wheel tracks were visible. The perilous wheels were negotiated at a tremendous pace, at one time the off-side wheels of the car being lifted clear of the ground. But the driver knew what he was doing, and at length, breathless with the exhilaration of his ride, with numb fingers that seemed frozen on to the steering wheel, and ears that seemed he falling off, he practically reached his destination.

It is in the heart of the town where Hagglegstone is black, bleakest, and most forbidding. On the outskirts there are hedges and trees that seem to flourish in the smoke, and green, green gardens to the little villas. The roadways are broad and pleasing. They seem to have been especially constructed to deceive.

The driver of the car slowed down here. The shelter afforded by the houses deadened the force of the wind, and taking off his cap he struggled to rub his eyes with one hand, whilst he steered with the other, slowing down the meantime.

The ice now fully revealed was that of a gentleman. The features were decidedly refined in type, and handsome. The complexion was fresh, and heightened by the drive against the cutting wind. The eyes were bold, fearless, and kindly in expression. The mouth was well-shaped; in fact, it was a splendid head.

The driver's clothing was all of an expensive character. The car was a car such as only a wealthy man could afford to run. Having relieved of speed, the driver replaced his cap and goggles, and forged his car on ahead at a fast pace.

Then, as—after sounding his hooter—he flashed round the corner, he saw a crowd of grown-up men in the road right in front of him, engaged in a fierce snow-fight. They were healthy-looking, thick-set men, and the snowballs were flying to right and left, aimed and with great force at the object aimed at. Every one of the combatants was covered with patches of adhering snow, the fighters filled the centre of the road. It was impossible to proceed without knocking some of them down if they failed to move out of the way.

The motor-man slowed down, and pressed the rubber bulb of his hooter fiercely.

“Toot! Toot! Toot!”

The men paused in their snow-fight. One of them made a remark which caused the others to roar with laughter, and the flying snowballs were used on their way again.

“Toot! Toot! Toot!”

The car was right amongst them, but as soon as the driver refused to budge, the driver brought it to a stand.

“Get out of the way,” he cried fiercely, “unless you want to be run down by me!”

He was answered by a roar of laughter, and a well-aimed snowball caught him full in the face, knocking off his goggles.

“Shame!” said one of the men mockingly. “Why don’t you get out of the way and let the others pass?”

There was another roar of laughter, and a perfect hail of snowballs fell upon the driver of the car, who was upon his jacket and cap and face, stinging him and causing him to grow red in the face with fury.

He was usually so unprovoked that he made a movement as if he would leave his car and go for them. But in time he realised that he would not find a ghost of a chance against the gang of hoodlums, and so he threw in his clutch and lurched the car forward.

“Look out,” he cried, “or I shall run you down!”

The car flashed on to them at tremendous speed. The man who had shield the first snowball at the driver of the car was almost caught on the wing of the bulldog, and went sprawling full length in the snow with a very faint cry.

The others rained a hail of snowballs after the disappearing vehicle, and then stood at it in contemptuous silence.

“A nice thing!” growled the man who had fallen in the snow, as he picked himself up.

“But I got the wind and number all right. That car don’t belong to Hagglegstone, but it does to me. I need the man who was driving it! I’ll lay my hands on him, and not too lightly, neither.”

“Shut up, Kingswell!” said one of the others. “We brought it on ourselves. The man has the right to use the road, and we ought not to have interfered with him!”

“I don’t care if he has a snowball hurled in your face when you’re not talking, but I’ll take care of him in a snow-fight. I reckon we’d better forget all about it!”

“He might have killed me!” growled the fellow who had been addressed as Kingswell.

He was a man of about twenty-five, broad-shouldered, bull-necked, with large, bushy eyebrows, that denoted great physical strength.

His face was red with the glow of health, but the disagreeable, but the disagreeable, that habitually ruled his features marred an otherwise not ill-looking face.

The brush with the driver of the car put an end to the snow-fight, and the men

who had been fiercely waging war with the snow thrust their hands into their pockets and traipsed off in the direction of the town.

They had covered about three-quarters of a mile, and were now in the main street of Hagglegstone proper, when, of a sudden, they came upon the offending motor-car. It was standing at the side of the road outside the entrance to the King’s Hotel.

The King’s Hotel is one of the principal hotels in Hagglegstone. It is situated at the head of Orange Street, and from the roof tall flagstaff reared itself into the air. A flag was flying on the head of the staff, a blue-and-white flag, bearing upon it the letters, in capitals, H.F.C.

A hundred yards further down Orange Street one came upon the first of the entrance-gates of the Hagglegstone Football Club’s enclosure. A mast set within the ground carried another blue-and-white flag bearing the same initials as that set upon the roof of the King’s Hotel.

“Well, I’m blowed!” cried Kingswell, pointing to the car. “Look at that! The West London team are staying here. I wonder if that bloke in the car has anything to do with ‘em?”

“I shouldn’t be at all surprised,” answered one of the others. “He is a stranger here. He may be one of the directors. He can’t be such a magnificent car as that. You’ll look funny, Kingswell, if he’s a toff, and he recognises you and reports you to your manager. You know how strict Mr. Burdwell is about our conduct in and about town. You’ve already been warned. You might get the sack.”

Kingswell turned on the speaker like a flash. “You mind your own business, Parson,” he cried, “or it’ll be the worse for you! Do you think I care a hang for West London, or its directors, or its manager, either? I’m going to get my own back on that bloke who tried to run me down, or I’ll know the reason why! Before he leaves Hagglegstone he’ll be sorry he ever meddled with me!”

“Kats!” retorted Parson. “We were in the wrong. We interfered with him. If he does happen to recognise you when you turn out for the team this afternoon, I should think you’d be wise to apologise, and say it was only intended as a joke. It would be a manly thing to do, and you’d put yourself in the right then.”

“Mind your own business!” cried Kingswell angrily, turning away and walking quickly towards the car without another word.

Parson looked aggrieved.

“But you ever see such a difficult, silly ass as Kingswell?” he cried regretfully, as he

glanced at his chum. “Upon my word, I don’t wish you would clear out of Hagglegstone. He’s the cleverest half-back we’ve ever had, but he’s no control over his temper. In fact, it’s worse why he’s never been kept by any of the big league clubs he’s played for. Oh, well, we can’t worry any more about him! Let’s go and get something to eat, for we shall need to be at our best against West London this afternoon!”

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

In the Billiard-room—A Distinguished Visitor—Kingswell’s Threatening Attitude.

IN the meantime, the driver of the car which had reached the King’s Hotel, his destination, had stopped the engine, and made his way into the comfortable and well-appointed hotel.

Drawing off his overcoat, he entered the billiard-room, where he heard the click of the ivory balls. A game was in progress, and he knew that he was surrounded by those that were members of the West London Reserve team who were playing.

As the door opened they looked up, and, recognising the new arrival, they set up a cheer. Two of them got up and hurried forward. The taller of the two, a handsome, refined-looking youth, extended his hand to the stranger.

“Setton,” he said, “I’m jolly glad you’ve come. I’ve been arguing the point with our trainer, Brown, and with Reginald Barry here. They said you’d never turn up. I mean you would. My cousin is a man of his word,” I said, “and if he says he’ll turn out with us to-day against Hagglegstone, he’ll do it. The snow and foot won’t stop him. I couldn’t convince Barry, however. Why should Setton turn out in such cruel weather as this, and risk a broken limb, or anything else?” he said. “I know jolly well if he were in his position I wouldn’t do it.”

The man addressed as Setton smiled, and his eyes had a merry look in them as he noticed that the rest of the West London players were regarding him in awe, and that the four who were playing billiards had stopped playing their game, as if embarrassed.

“Go on playing, boys!” he cried, in a genial, friendly kind of way. “Don’t mind me.”

The billiard game was started again; and Setton, crossing to the fire, removed his heavy coat and drew an armchair up to it, holding out his chilled fingers towards the comforting blaze.

“You might have looked upon my coming as a certainty, Barry,” he said, smiling at the good-looking youth who had set himself down on a lounge close by, “if you had known how keen I am on playing this Severn game. My doctor told me that since I had been taking training spins with your football team, and had gone in for strict physical training, my health had improved beyond all knowledge. He thought football playing would be good for me. The only thing that he didn’t approve of was my intention to play for a professional football

(Continued on the next page.)



Of a sudden, as Setton cleverly tripped him, Kingswell reached down and took up a handful of frozen ice and snow, and hurled the mass full in Setton’s face.

