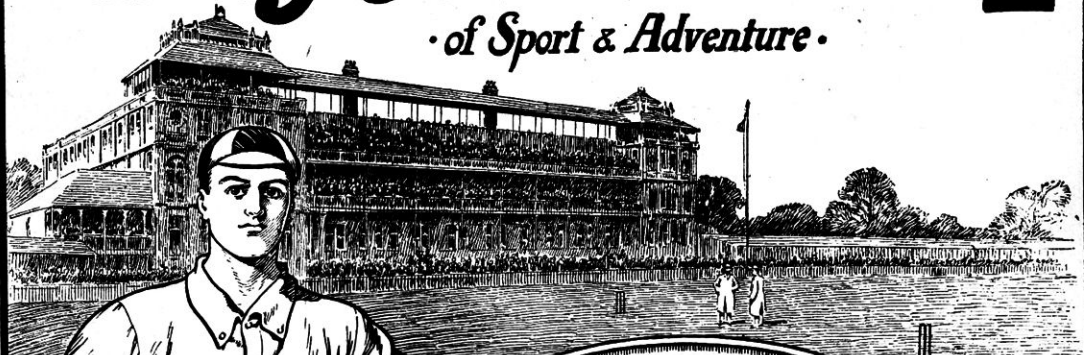


JOIN OUR CRICKET LEAGUE TO-DAY. (See Inside.)

The Boys' Realm¹⁰

· of Sport & Adventure ·



GRAND NEW CRICKET SERIAL

THE NEW BOWLER

A TALE OF COUNTY CRICKET &
· NELSON LEE, DETECTIVE ·

By Maxwell Scott.

FIGHTING FOR PROMOTION

TEDDY LESTER'S SCHOOLDAYS

BY JOHN FINNEMORE

THE PLAYERS

A Tale of the Great Australian Cricket Tour, Introducing Nelson Lee, the Famous Detective, and Jack Hartley.

By MAXWELL SCOTT.

COMMENCE THE STORY HERE.

The Australians. Dick Vernon, a young Australian farmer, with no mean reputation as a cricketer, takes part in a match at Sydney...

Nelson Lee, the great British private detective, is in Sydney at the time this match is played...

At Rig's Farm. During his journey to Rig's farm, Dick falls in with a stranger whose destination is Australia...

THE 5th CHAPTER. The Tables Turned. The Nth meeting the overseer and the rest of the hands, four in number, had shuttered the windows and had loaded the rifles...

Here they held a hurried council of war, in which Mendoza took part, and in consequence of which Dan Murphy, presently rode up to the kitchen fluttering from a while pocket-handkerchief fluttering from the end of the barrel of his upraised rifle...

It was an unexpected and a disagreeable surprise for Dan Murphy and his gang. They had confidently counted on taking the station by surprise, and had merely fired that opening volley...

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nothing in the world induce me to make terms with a murderer. But I'm not master here. I must consult the others before I give you my answer."

"So quick about it, then!" growled Murphy. Dick consulted the overseer, the rest of the hands, and finally Ruth Sinclair. They were in the same opinion as himself. Desperate as the situation was, the affection they had borne for the murdered John Rig forbade them for a moment to entertain the idea of coming to terms with the scoundrel who had murdered him."

"Besides," said the overseer, "if we accepted Murphy's terms, do you think he'd keep his part of the bargain?" "No fear!" said the others.

"Of course he wouldn't!" said the overseer. "As soon as we opened the door, he and his men would rush into the house and murder the lot of us."

"That's a good thing," said Dick. "The more we refuse their terms?" "Yes!" chorused Ruth and the others. Dick murmured assent to Dan Murphy. The bushranger made no reply, but with another explosive shrug of his burly shoulders, walked his horse round and rode back to his quarters."

A period of tense and anxious suspense ensued, during which, unknown to Dick and his accomplices, the bushrangers climbed on to the roof of the stables and wrenched off as many sheets of corrugated iron as there were men. By their means they were enabled to creep in, and one that they had adopted with unfeigned success on many previous occasions.

"I believe they've gone away," said Ruth, who had been on the watch, and clasped without any further sign of the bushrangers. Dick shook his head.

"That's a good thing," said grimly. "Dan Murphy and his gang are not so easily discouraged as all that. Why they have delayed their attack so long, and what they propose to do, I confess, I can't imagine; but I'm perfectly sure—"

The sentence ended in a cry of dismay, for the bushrangers slipped from the eaves into the yard, two of them armed with axes, the rest of them armed with revolvers, and all of them the same deadly-cold, steady-eyed, iron-willed, then a bullet-proof shield!

"Crack, crack, crack!" A rain of bullets poured through the loopholes in the stables' windows. But the bullets glanced harmlessly off the sheets of corrugated iron, and a moment later the two men who were armed with axes were hacking at the front door.

"It's all up now!" groaned Dick, as the door fell in with a deafening crash. But he did not know it until he saw them. The words had scarcely crossed his lips ere Mendoza, who had hitherto remained in the background, sprang from the stockyard gate, mounted on his chestnut mare.

"Flee! Flee for your lives!" he yelled. "The troopers are coming!" "They're dug into his horse's sides and galloped off at whirlwind speed. With shouts of alarm the bushrangers dashed on to the stables, and the rest of the stables, where they had left their horses. For a moment Dick and his companions could scarcely credit the good luck that their eyes beheld. They darted out into the moonlit yard.

About a quarter of a mile away they saw a column of light, which they perceived to be a company of troopers, approaching the station. Dick fired his gun, to attract their attention, and exactly pointed to the bushrangers, who were already mounting their horses and were galloping off in an opposite direction to that taken by Mendoza. Instinctive the troopers guessed what had happened; and the next instant they were tearing after the bushrangers in hot and furious pursuit.

The rest may be told in very few words. After a short but exciting chase, followed by a desperate fight, in which many casualties were incurred, the troopers proved victorious, and Dan Murphy and his gang were overpowered and secured.

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THE 5th CHAPTER. At the events related in our last four chapters—the arrival of Mendoza at Sunny Creek, the murder of John Rig, and the attack on the bushrangers and their subsequent pursuit and capture—happened on Tuesday night. On the following

Friday, as the reader will remember, Dick Vernon had been invited and had promised to play in the second Trial match at Melbourne; and the programme he had sketched out for himself, before the murder of John Rig; had been as follows:—

On Tuesday night, after spending an hour or so with Ruth, he had intended to return to Geelong. On Wednesday he had intended to attend to meet Bardley, Noble, Gregory, Cottrell, and the other members of the "Rest," and Gorry—all of whom hailed from New South Wales, and all of whom were going to Melbourne to play in the Trial match, some of them to be supported by the "Rest."

On Wednesday afternoon he had intended to leave with them for Melbourne. On Thursday evening he had intended to spend Thursday evening, and to play the match on Friday.

Such, we say, had been Dick Vernon's programme when he arrived at Sunny Creek on Tuesday night. After the murder of John Rig, however, he decided that he could not venture back alone with her great trouble, but must stay with her until after her adopted father's funeral, and until his affairs had been wound up.

But he had reckoned without Ruth. The moment he told her what he had decided to do, she at once forbade him to do anything of the kind. "If you don't go to Sydney to-morrow," she said, "you won't be able to reach Melbourne in time for the second Trial match."

"Of course not," assented Dick. "And if you don't play in the match on Friday," said Ruth, "you lose all chance of being the star of the occasion." "That's so," said Dick. "But my first duty is to help you all I can, and so I will have to go to Sydney to-morrow and play in the match at Melbourne on Friday. If you want to help me, that's the way to do it!"

"I'm not," said Ruth, "to be deserted by you in your hour of trouble and going to Geelong, and then to go to England. I want to be there when I am there, and to help me to avenge my father's death."

"That's just what I really mean to do," said Dick. "You'll be glad to see me to Geelong?" "Yes, certainly," said Dick. "What about your father's death?" "I'll be glad to see you to Geelong."

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Barrie, Simpson, Kellaway, Whitty, Gorry, and Cottrell were the only players who were in the field. There is no need to describe the first day's play as any great length. The Anglo-Australians were so well off to see the play that they kept their opponents in the field all day. When stumps were drawn they had scored 480 for the loss of only six wickets. The only bowler who had any success was Bardeley, 206, and Dick Vernon 49.

From the first ball at Saturday morning Dick was out at the wicket, thus failing by one run to achieve the coveted half century. Cottrell partnered Bardeley, who carried his innings to 86, and the other players, by Whitty, of Saunders's bowling. Eventually, a few minutes before the lunch interval, O'Connor was out for the loss of only one wicket, thus terminating for the highly-respectable total of 648.

After lunch the Anglo-Australians took the field, and Parker (West Australia) and Mayne (South Australia) came out to open the innings of the Rest. Dick was entrusted with the first over, and remembering his sensational feat at Sydney, he pitched his first ball, which struck with his first three balls, the spectators metaphorically held their breath.

"I was not, however, so successful on this triumph! It was too good to expect. Everybody said so, and Dick agreed with them. All this means, I think, is that Dick's bowling is of a medium-paced ball, which he meant to pitch on the middle stump, and break away to the off for a catch in the slip. Running in to meet it, he lashed out with his bat, and the crowd involuntarily rose to its feet, expecting to see the batsman go over the bowler's head and out of the ground.

"It was a magnificent straight drive, and the ball flew through the air with a velocity directed at the velocity of a cannon-ball. Dick saw it coming, a yard or more above his head, and with the swiftness of a lightning-bolt, he directed at the air and flung up his right hand. "Smack!"

He stopped the ball, but the impact numbed the left hand, and the ball fell. It rebounded from the centre of his palm, and dropped towards the ground. In an agony of disappointment he watched the ball as it fell. His left hand, scooped up the ball, a bare half inch from the ground, and tossed it into the air, with an alacrity which was almost comical. The cricketer Parker could scarcely believe his eyes. Neither could the crowd. But the umpire could.

"Out!" he said stolidly. "Then it dawmed on everybody that Dick had caught the batsman. What was he waiting for? Dick had secured a wicket with his first delivery. Like one cheered until they were hoarse, Parker sadly retraced his steps to the pavilion. Dick's comrades, crowded round him, congratulated him on his success, and they all sang out on the back.

"The finest catch I ever saw," said Noble; and the other players joined in the rest. Gehr, of South Australia, took the vacant wicket, and faced Dick's next delivery with ill-concealed trepidation. But his nerves were not affected by the effects of his sensational catch, and he could neither grip the ball properly, nor give it the correct flight, which were the characteristics of his bowling.

Gehr's son discovered that Dick's bowling had lost its sting, and hastened to take advantage of it. Dick's fingers were aching, and his discovery, and after 20 runs had been scored by Dick, without any further loss, he took over the bowling, and after a rest, and against the bowling of Armstrong and Cotter, Gehr and Mayne scored fairly freely; so, at last, Dick's services were again requisitioned, and he again took the field with the "Rest," by his injured hand, he soon bowled Gehr, and two overs later, got Hopkins caught at the stumps. When stumps were drawn the Rest had scored 178 for three wickets, Mayne being not out.

Sunday, of course, was a day of rest, and the match was resumed on Monday morning. Dick and Armstrong shared the bowling, and the "Rest" were so well off to see the play, quite recovered from the effects of the injury to his hand.

In quick succession he captured Carroll and his partner, Mayne. Kellaway made something of a stand, the whole side was out before for 305.

With fast Saunders's wicket the match came to an end, the total of the Rest's second innings being 165, and the Anglo-Australians thus winning by the conclusive margin of an innings.

"Which we owe entirely to you, my boy!" said Noble to Dick as they left the field. "You have more than your share of credit to thank you for the decision Committee. Your place in the team that is going to England is now assured. You can put up your traps, and make all arrangements to depart on Friday."

Noble's prophecy proved correct, for that same evening Dick received an official communication from the Committee of Selection, Mr. McLaren, Bardley, Noble, Ransford, Gregory, Armstrong, Macartney, Vernon, Cottrell, and Gorry.

The Rest were also a powerful combination, as the following list of names will prove:—Parker, Mayne, Gehr, Hopkins, Carroll,

formally inviting him to form one of the team to visit the Old Country.

Next to accept the invitation, and when morning news was cabled to England that the following sixteen players had been selected to represent Australia, and would, with Frank Laver, Victor, as manager, sail for England on the Ss. Ontario in five weeks' time: J. Vernon, J. R. Bardley, M. A. Noble, S. E. Gregory, A. Cotter, V. Trumper, H. Carter, C. G. Macartney, A. J. Hopkins, all of New South Wales; J. A. Arundell, G. S. Ranford, P. McAlister, W. Carkeek (all of Victoria), V. J. Whitley, J. A. O'Connor (both of Queensland), and R. Hartigan (of Queensland).

**THE 7th CHAPTER.
Bound for England.**

FIVE weeks elapsed. The Australian cricketers, after being entertained at a public luncheon by the Governor-General, left the Earl of Dupuy, who had embarked on board the Ontario, and were now on their way to England. Ruth Sinclair, who had meanwhile left the farm at Sunny Creek, had booked her passage by the same vessel, and at the moment when we renew our acquaintance with her, she is again on board the promenade deck of the Ontario, gazing at the fast-retreating shores of Australia.

On the 27th of March the fortnight-navigated voyage proceeded without incident, deck-cricket and other sports being the order of the day, with concerts and amateur theatricals.

Long before the end of the fortnight, Ruth had established herself as a prime favourite with the rest of the passengers, and with members of the Australian team, knowing that she was engaged to their most popular captain, Cyril Lewis, having an English mother and her mission to England, plus her rich misanthropic attentions, and vied with each other in their endeavours to anticipate her slightest wish.

On April 8th the Ontario arrived at her first port of call—Colombo, the commercial capital of Ceylon. Here the passengers disembarked, and here also several new passengers came aboard, amongst whom was Nelson Lee, the famous English detective.

"Nelson Lee!" exclaimed Dick, when he saw him. "Well, I never! Fancy meeting you here."
"Why not?" said the detective, with a smile. "Didn't I tell you when I saw you in England that I was going to England to hunt for the final piece of evidence that I required to complete my case?"

"You did," said Dick; "but that was a couple of months ago, and it has been by this time you would be back in England."
"I also expected that I should be back in England by now," said Nelson Lee. "But my investigations in Ceylon took longer than I anticipated. However, I got what I wanted in the end, so my time has not been wasted."
"Your case is finished, then," said Dick.

"You are now returning to England?"
"Yes," said Nelson Lee. "You are not going to England, too, I see. Well, you are surprised. I told you, didn't I, that you were certain to be selected to go to England? I told you I should see you in England. You may confess I didn't expect to see you quite so soon as this."
"Whether did I," said Dick. "But I'm very glad to have met you before I reach England, because—"

"—I'm turned to Ruth."
"This is Mr. Nelson Lee, my dear," he said. "Then he turned to the detective."
"Miss Sinclair," he said, "my affianced wife. She is going to England, too, and may have need of your services there."
The detective bowed to Ruth.

"I shall be glad to see you," he said, "if you are to command."
"Then he glanced inquiringly at Dick."
"I don't mind a bit," said Nelson Lee. "I shall be glad to see you, too, if you are to command."

"Certainly!" said Ruth. "I shall be only too glad to hear what Mr. Lee thinks of the affair, and to have the benefit of his advice."

"Dinner was over, Nelson Lee and Ruth and Dick were seated in a secluded corner of the dining room. Dick had explained to Nelson Lee about the murder of John Rigg, and Ruth had shown him the leaf of the account-book which John Rigg had scrawled his dying request.

"And now, what's your theory?" asked Dick.
"It is impossible to formulate any theory at present," said Nelson Lee. "Before I begin writing theories I must have a great deal more information than I possess at present. For instance—" he turned to Ruth—"what do you know of your adopted father's history?"

"Practically nothing," said Ruth. "He was of English birth, I believe, and emigrated to Australia many years ago, and was always very good and kind to me, but he never spoke of his parents."
"Did you ever hear him mention the name of Mendoza?"

"Never."
"Over to any of your enemies, he died either in England or elsewhere?"

"Never."
"You must have had enemies, and the fact that he told you, if you wished to avenge his

death, to go to this London lawyer, would seem to show that his enemies were in England. Hence, when he emigrated to Australia, he did so in order to hide from his enemies. Possibly they traced him to Australia after a lapse of many years, and sent Mendoza to interview him.

"With what object?" asked Dick.
The detective shook his head.

"I can only suppose," he said, "that Mendoza bribed the strangers to attack the house, and instructed them to offer to let you all go free if you would let them to interview Mr. Rigg, and that there was no document amongst them of the slightest importance to anybody."

"I will offer another suggestion, then," said Nelson Lee. "Perhaps Mr. Rigg, before he emigrated to Australia, confided the papers to Mr. Tweedie. Perhaps his enemies knew that he had confided them to somebody, but didn't know to whom. Perhaps Mendoza wanted to search the house, in the hope of discovering the names and addresses of the men to whom Mr. Rigg had confided the papers."

"That sounds more likely," said Dick. "If you and Mr. Rigg were the last to interview Mr. Tweedie, and the mystery will be solved."

"Exactly," said Nelson Lee. "Five minutes talk to Mr. Tweedie may clear up the whole mystery."
He turned to Ruth.

"What are your plans?" he asked. "Where are you going to stay when you reach England?"

"With an old school-friend of mine," said Ruth—"Mrs. Hartley, of Torbay Manor, in Devonshire."

"Mrs. Hartley's wife?" exclaimed Nelson Lee.
"Yes," said Ruth. "Do you know Mr. Hartley?"

"Very well indeed," said Nelson Lee. "As

Our Cricket League.

Below is a list of Cricket Clubs which have applied for admission to THE BOYS' REALM Cricket League up to the time of going to press:

SENIOR SECTION.
West Kensington United C.C., St. Michael's C.C., Nine Elms Brewery C.C., and Albert United C.C. (A Team).

JUNIOR SECTION.
Cheshunt Juniors C.C., St. Mark's Lads C.C., Bruce Athletic C.C., Laisterdyke Crescent C.C., Swan Athletic C.C., Croftonians C.C., Glendale C.C., Histon Institute Juniors C.C., Alby United C.C. (B Team), Ferndale Athletic C.C., St. Aloysius C.C., Brooklyns C.C., and Mount St. Mary's C.C.

The following clubs have neglected to state which Section of the League they wished to join (Junior or Senior): Havetock C.C., Eclipse C.C., Birstall Invicta C.C., and Montgomery C.C.

Full Particulars of How to Join Will be Found on Page 794.

a matter of fact, I'm going to Torbay Manor myself soon after I reach England."

"He turned to Dick.
"And you and the rest of the Australian team are going to Torbay, I believe?" he said.

"Yes," said Dick. "Mr. Hartley has invited us to meet his house on the heights for the first week or fortnight after our arrival. He's very keen on cricket, isn't he?"

"Very!" said Nelson Lee. "And he plays cricket. You see, my father's Scotch, he's a Canadian by birth, as he only settled in England last year, so he's qualified to play for any English county. Not to be deprived of his cricket, he has got together a splendid team of players which he calls the 'Ramblers,' and he has arranged a list of fixtures with all the leading counties."

"I know," said Dick. "We are to practise on his private cricket-ground, and we are to play our first match in England against the 'Glenites.'"

"And Jack Hartley has invited me to play for the Ramblers against you," said Nelson Lee. "That's what I'm going to Torbay."
He turned to Ruth again.

"So we shall meet again at Torbay Manor in a few weeks' time," said Nelson Lee. "In the meantime, you like, I will see Mr. Tweedie as soon as I reach England, and I will ascertain if he can throw any light on the mystery of your adopted father's death."

"Thank you," said Ruth; "but I would rather see Mr. Tweedie myself in the first instance. You see, my father asked me to do it. If Mr. Tweedie cannot solve the mystery, I shall be very glad indeed to avail myself of his disappointment."
"You see," said Nelson Lee, "the meaning of that is to give you good word of advice."

"Certainly!" said Ruth. "What is that?"

"If my theory is correct," said Nelson Lee. "If Mr. Rigg emigrated to Australia, and that it was Mr. Tweedie, if his enemies do not know the name and address of the man with whom he confided the papers, and if he is desperate

and anxious—as they appear to be—to ascertain the name and address, don't you think it would be wise to burn the leaf which you tore out of the account-book, and to write to Mr. Rigg, who wrote the name and address?"

"Oh, I couldn't think of burning it!" said Ruth. "They were the last words my father ever wrote, and—and— Well, I simply couldn't burn them!"

"I have given you my advice," he said. "It is for you, of course, to decide whether you will follow it or not. I do not know what perhaps Mr. Rigg's enemies might make an attempt to secure the page. But, of course, if you prefer not to destroy it—"

"He shrugged his shoulders."
"I have nothing more to say," he said.
Saying which, he rose to his feet, bowed to Nelson Lee and Ruth, and sauntered off to the smoke-room.

If only Ruth had taken his advice!

**THE 8th CHAPTER.
The Two Spies.**

ON the twelfth day after leaving Colombo, the Ontario passed through the Suez Canal, and three days later she arrived at Naples.

A good many of the passengers disembarked at Naples, and a few new passengers came aboard. Amongst the latter—that is to say, amongst the new passengers who joined the Ontario at Naples—were two young English tourists who appeared to be inseparable chums, and who registered in the names of Colonel Wynndham and Miss Sinclair.

Half an hour after the Ontario had left Naples, Copley, with a white, excited-looking face, came hurrying up to Wynndham, who was suing himself on the hurricane door.

"I've just made a terrible discovery!" he said in a low, agitated voice. "Nelson Lee is aboard!"

Wynndham dropped his cigarette and reeled as if he had been struck.

"What do you mean, Copley? Are you sure?"

"I've seen him," said Copley. "He joined the ship at Colombo, and intends to remain on board until he reaches Plymouth. Worst of

Lee as soon as the Ontario arrives at Gibraltar, I have no doubt, he will allow the bait. He will leave the ship and start for Madrid. The ship will then resume her voyage without hindrance, she reaches Plymouth, in which to carry out our plan."

Copley gazed at him admiringly.
"You never have thought of a simple dodge like that!"

It was April 27th. The Ontario had reached Gibraltar, and was anchored in the bay. Most of the Australian cricketers had gone ashore, to watch the sights of the famous city, and the ship was empty of passengers, and was chatting to Ruth in the music-room.

Presently the door opened and Nelson Lee put in his head.

"Ah! Here you are!" he said, walking in. "I've come to say good-bye—or, rather, adieu. I'm going to visit my mother."

"Leaving us?" exclaimed Dick and Ruth in the same breath.

"Yes," said the detective. "As you know, I intended to stay aboard till the vessel reached Plymouth; but I've just received an urgent telegram from my mother, and she wants to see me at Madrid. Some important despatches have been stolen, and one of the secretaries has fallen into the hands of the police. My mother wishes me to investigate the affair."

"So you are going to Macedonia?" said Dick.
"Yes," said Nelson Lee. "I don't know how long it may take me to return to London, but I hope to be back in England in time to play against you at Torbay. In the meantime—"

He hurried off to the gangway, where a boat was in waiting for him. He crossed the bay to Algierce, and alighted at the same moment as the steamer was about to start. He resumed her voyage, the detective took his seat in the Madrid express.

"Nelson Lee," said Copley. "I've seen him!" he said. "He joined the ship at Colombo, and intends to remain on board until he reaches Plymouth. Worst of

all, he's an intimate friend of Vernon and Miss Sinclair, and spends nearly all his time in the company."

Wynndham spat out a venomous imprecation.
"The chief culprit to have told us," he said. "He'd no right to send us on a mission of that kind without warning us that Nelson Lee was aboard."

"But I don't suppose the chief knew," said Copley.

"Then Mendoza ought to have told him," said Copley. "I don't suppose Mendoza knew either," said Copley. "You see, Mendoza's complaint to the chief was despatched from London. He never saw Nelson Lee. At that time Nelson Lee wasn't aboard; and, of course, Mendoza couldn't guess that he would join the ship at Colombo."

Wynndham nodded.
"You're right," he said. "Now I come to think of it, neither Mendoza nor the chief could possibly know that Nelson Lee was aboard."

"It upsets all our calculations, doesn't it?" said Copley. "I don't suppose Mendoza knew either," said Copley. "You see, Mendoza's complaint to the chief was despatched from London. He never saw Nelson Lee. At that time Nelson Lee wasn't aboard; and, of course, Mendoza couldn't guess that he would join the ship at Colombo."

Wynndham nodded.
"You're right," he said. "Now I come to think of it, neither Mendoza nor the chief could possibly know that Nelson Lee was aboard."

"I'll take charge of it with pleasure," said Dick. "I'll take charge of it with pleasure, and slip it into his waistcoat pocket."

"We'll discuss what's best to be done with it later. In the meantime, I must inform the police of the loss of the account-book. You stay here. I'll be back in a minute."

Leaving Ruth in the cabin, he started off for the hotel, and, after a short stay, he was intensely dark; and, as already mentioned, the Ontario's decks were embroiled in mist.

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"We'll discuss what's best to be done with it later. In the meantime, I must inform the police of the loss of the account-book. You stay here. I'll be back in a minute."

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FEED YOUR EDITOR'S CHAIR.



Your Editor is always glad to hear from you about yourself or your favourite paper. He will answer you by post if you enclose a stamped addressed postcard or envelope. Write to him if you are in trouble, if you want information, or if you have any ideas for our paper. All letters to be addressed to the Editor of THE BOYS' REALM, 23 Bowdrie Street, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

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

New Features Coming. My chums already know that I am ever on the look-out for special attractions for THE BOYS' REALM, and that I spare neither time nor expense in my endeavours to procure the very best stories and articles for publication in our columns. This week, the special feature of our paper is the new series of "Cricket League" articles by J. B. Hobbs, of the Surrey XI, than whom there is no greater authority on all matters pertaining to our national summer pastime. I hope my friends will tell their chums about this brilliant new series of articles from his pen. I am now making arrangements for the publication of swimming, cycling, running, and rowing articles by experts. All these will commence in our paper very shortly, and will be written by well-known and well-versed men connected with each sport mentioned. I hope to be able to reveal their names at an early date.

Our Cricket League. APPLICATIONS are pouring in from the secretaries of cricket clubs all over the country, asking that they may compete in our Great Cup Competitions, full particulars of which appear on another page. There is every indication that this year our Cricket League will be more successful than ever before. It is evident that the junior cricketers of our country are waking up to the fact that they have everything to gain and nothing to lose by joining THE BOYS' REALM League. Here are a few reasons why the club in which you are personally interested should compete: 1. Because there is no entrance fee. 2. Because added interest is thereby given to the ordinary friendly matches. 3. Because each club interested has a good chance of securing the solid silver trophy which I have put up for competition.

Conquering the Smoking Habit. It is from a Carnarvon reader, whose initials are L. J., that I get a very interesting question. He tells me that he cannot give up smoking, although he is convinced that the habit is doing him a great deal of harm. Can I help him? He asks. I have never answered a reader that in confessing he cannot conquer the smoking habit he is giving himself a very poor character? He is practically saying that he is not master of his own mind, and this is a confession which no boy ought to make. I do not see any reason why a boy should smoke, but I do see and do know scores of reasons why a boy should not smoke. The chief reason why a boy should not smoke is that it damages his physical condition, and if he did not smoke he would be a better and healthier lad. Smoking by lads is apt to affect them mentally as well as physically. I can give this paragraph to enter into the action which tobacco has on the system, but particular facts may be seen by smoking on the part of boys is apt to react through the tissues upon the brain, and in a certain way to demoralize them, and set up diseases which should not exist.

Now, my Carnarvon friend, why do you smoke the experiment, and you send me your plodge? Why not say to me: "I am going to throw up smoking, and I am twenty-one, because I realise it is not going to be any good; on the contrary, it is going to do me a lot of harm, and because I am not going to confess to myself that I am a slave to any habit?" It is when I receive letters like L. J.'s that I am doubly glad that the law has stepped in and prohibited youngsters under sixteen years of age from smoking. I believe that there is a tremendous amount of harm being done to the young generation through indulgence in this foolish and silly practice. Ever since the early days of the "The Boys' Friend" I have been preaching against smoking by boys, and have endeavoured to stir up parents, teachers, and those in still higher authority to a sense of this terrible evil. And at length my efforts have borne fruit, and we now have a law to deal with juvenile smokers. I am highly glad of it.

On Emigration. THOUGH I thought of many an enterprising boy in his early years turn towards emigrating. It is surprising what a number of boys commence life in a new country. Very naturally this is so, and the reason of it is easily found. Boys read newspapers, and know how the nowadays then was former the case, and the consequence of this excellent habit is that many lads realise that in our "rich" island, splendid chances for the steady, shrewd, industrious boy.

But this is not the only spur to emigration which boys receive. I read also in the newspapers, and in the many weekly periodicals, stories of men who, by industry and perseverance, have won for themselves a better fortune in the great race of life. Naturally, with these things in his mind—brought before his eyes—many a bright boy says to himself, there are plenty of chances for me out of Great Britain—more than I shall ever get at home—so I am off to one of the Colonies.

A Warning. ALL this leads me to the object of this and the preceding paragraph—a warning to those boys who are thinking of emigrating. First, however, let me lay down for their guidance a few points which they should carefully consider before they decide to go abroad.

I cordially recommend my friends to—

"PLAYING THE GAME." My Dear Boys—Life is very like a game of cricket, and it is a most important thing to observe the rules. Outlookers soon enough see when anyone is cheating, and you can always tell the content of his mind by the way he plays. It is not very difficult to see whether you are playing the game of life fairly except yourself. It is not very difficult to see how false, but it brings little satisfaction. I have known a very large number of boys, but who quite differ from other men. Their words are their bonds, and their uprightness and gentleness inspire those who are called men of the world have played the game, which makes all the difference, though possibly they may have won the outer gains, but the man who deals in falsehood and lies, and who means everything he says. Stand up for a golden rule, that is, that you should do to others as you would have them do to you. Everything undertaken, and whatever bit of work you have to do, should be done to the best of your ability, and to the best to leave it. Do not be slipped about your business because no one is looking, or because the governor is away. Playing the game means sincerity in every step or form. Through we do not all as brilliant, there is a certain sterling worth in honest plodding and straightforwardness which brings with it its own reward. If it is fine thing to be honest up to a home where everything from top to bottom is real, and I write to you as one who had this great advantage. Anything else is un-British, and the time is coming when you shall need all the old island virtues which made our ancestors what they were, and which will slip away from us every day unless we take uncommon good care. This, then, is my advice to you, and if you "play the game" you will be surprised if many of you don't get top average. —Your affectionate friend, CHAPLAIN OF THE SAVOY.

The first is that they should possess the willing consent of their parents. The second is that they should be healthy and strong. The third is that they should possess a knowledge of some useful trade; clerks and young men without any calling are not wanted in new countries. Everyone must be able to do something—something useful, something which will help the Colony forward. A fourth most useful point to bear in mind is that the young emigrant must select a Colony whose prospects are increasing. And still one other important point is for the would-be emigrant to be careful not to be gulled by plausible advertisements. Information respecting our various Colonies, my readers cannot do better than apply to the Emigrants' Information Office, 31, Broadway, London, S.W. This is a Government office, and there is no fear of the applicants for particulars of emigration being given false accounts of the prospects of the Colony they are thinking of going to.

A Bad Memory. "ACQUIRER" wants me to advise him concerning a system of memory training, which he has been advertised. I am afraid that I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of recommending any system of memory training, because I know nothing whatever about the results achieved by them. I only know that any loss of average intelligence can be regained by the aid of a certain amount of mental training. Memory is, after all, largely a matter of habit. Get your memory into a proper way of working, and it won't fail you when you want to use it.

Failure of memory is a very common thing among the young, and it is apt to grow out of a few sets of nerves, when the vital importance of not forgetting things is realised.

A Yankee Reader's Grumble. I AM always glad to receive letters of candid criticism from my readers, whether the writer grumbles at my papers or praises them. Of course, I do not like to get several pages of vulgar abuse, as I must admit I have done on occasion, not because this does me any harm, but because I am beyond a shadow of doubt that the writer is a little-minded snob, and not worth a moment's thought. That is why I never correspond with any man who writes me through the post or on his page. But as I have already said, I do like honest, candid criticism. If any of my friends have a grumble to make, let them write me a gentlemanly note pointing out exactly the trouble, and their letter will be my future programme for the papers under my control.

I carefully read this cheery talk—YOUR EDITOR.

By the Chaplain of the Savoy. My Dear Boys—Life is very like a game of cricket, and it is a most important thing to observe the rules. Outlookers soon enough see when anyone is cheating, and you can always tell the content of his mind by the way he plays. It is not very difficult to see whether you are playing the game of life fairly except yourself. It is not very difficult to see how false, but it brings little satisfaction. I have known a very large number of boys, but who quite differ from other men. Their words are their bonds, and their uprightness and gentleness inspire those who are called men of the world have played the game, which makes all the difference, though possibly they may have won the outer gains, but the man who deals in falsehood and lies, and who means everything he says. Stand up for a golden rule, that is, that you should do to others as you would have them do to you. Everything undertaken, and whatever bit of work you have to do, should be done to the best of your ability, and to the best to leave it. Do not be slipped about your business because no one is looking, or because the governor is away. Playing the game means sincerity in every step or form. Through we do not all as brilliant, there is a certain sterling worth in honest plodding and straightforwardness which brings with it its own reward. If it is fine thing to be honest up to a home where everything from top to bottom is real, and I write to you as one who had this great advantage. Anything else is un-British, and the time is coming when you shall need all the old island virtues which made our ancestors what they were, and which will slip away from us every day unless we take uncommon good care. This, then, is my advice to you, and if you "play the game" you will be surprised if many of you don't get top average. —Your affectionate friend, CHAPLAIN OF THE SAVOY.

I have received this week a grumbling letter from one of my Yankee friends whose initials are J. H. M. This is what he has to say:

"Dear Editor,—I have been a reader of 'The Boys' Friend' since its halcyon days. THE REALM since its formation, also 'The Union Jack' and 2d. Liberty, and I have yet to see their equal on either side of the ' Pond.' Now, dear Editor, do you honestly think you are giving your Scotch readers a 'square deal' by: 'Omitting out of fourteen stories in these four papers to have one about Scotland or even in any way mention the Thistle? ' '2. By the distribution of those magnificent photos of the leading football teams to omit the production of Scotch clubs? ' '3. By your far too frequent allusions to England as good old England, which raises the feeling that your papers are not the place of its publication in Great Britain would be a little more harmonious to all at home, in the Colonies, and abroad. I am not Scotch, but an American who resided in Scotland for a short time, and who admires the ways and manners of its people. ' '4. An amateur of football team out here, and most congratulatory you on your splendid football tales and the excellent advice you give to all your readers. ' '5. By refusing to give a reply in one of your two papers. 'The Friend' or REALM, at an early date, which will show I have written on behalf of all Scotlands. Wishing you and your papers every success, I remain, 'A YANKEE READER.' "

I feel sure that any Scottish friends will be obliged to J. H. M. for thus taking up the cause of his country. I think that enough, none of them have complained to me about the three points mentioned in the above letter. Nevertheless, I will see what I can do to rectify the situation, as it applies to more Scottish tales in my papers than heretofore.

He Wants to Become a Railway Guard. JOHN S., of Birmingham, informs me that it is his ambition to become a Railway Guard. He, therefore, writes to me for advice. The following facts were kindly supplied me by one of my readers, who is an employee of the Great Western Railway. This information upon how to become a guard is not only authentic, therefore, but of a highly practical nature, and should consequently be of great value to every reader who is thinking of securing a position upon a railway.

To become a guard, applicants must generally first become porters. Applications should be addressed to the "Superintendent of the Line." Nearly every spring several hundreds of men are taken on by the various authorities, which is termed "Summer Service." Some of these are afterwards dismissed, but this "summer service" gives the applicant a very good introduction to the service of a railway company.

After mastering porter's work, the ambitious young man will proceed a step higher in the railway world, and become a porter-guard. This, is partly porter and partly guard. From porter-guard to second guard, and from second guard to head guard are but rungs higher up on the ladder. The following is a table of wages, from a porter to a guard: Porters, 18s. to 17s. per week (and tips); porter-guard, 17s. to 16s.; second guard, 22s. to 23s.; head guards, 27s. to 28s. And now, having supplied my chum with all the information he needs, it only remains for me to wish him every success.

My Brief Reply Corner. A CRIP FOR BLACKHEAD.—From Glasgow I have received a letter from J. K. asking me for a cure for blackhead.

Blackheads are the part affected very often with a deal of soap and hot water, followed by a brisk rubbing with a rough towel. It will hasten the disappearance of these blackheads, but will be the most judicious part of the steam arising from a basin of hot water every night, and then rubs them briskly as previously mentioned. It is a good plan to take a regular take plenty of exercise, and a hot bath once a week.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

The Wrong Referee.

A HUMOROUS COMPLETE FOOTBALL TALE.



John Crook pointed excitedly to the middle of the field. "They've got the wrong referee!" he yelled. "That's not Edgar Mason!"

The Publican Who Tried Bribery and Corruption.

JOHN CROOK, publican of Little Marley, sat one Sunday afternoon in a big arm-chair in the bar-parlour of the Coach and Horse, smoking a churchwarden, and thinking hard as he gazed into the glowing embers of the pipe.

Crook was a famous character in Little Marley, one of the best-hearted, best-humoured men that ever lived, and, according to the story, despite the fact that he had for eleven years run the Coach and Horse, turning it during that period into a paying concern, the best-hearted publican was a teetotaler.

In his younger days John Crook had been a fine all-round athlete, a good boxer, and a capital horseman. In those days the game of football was practically unknown in Little Marley, it being quite a modern craze.

John Crook himself never seen the game played until his son Jack came back from school two years ago; but during the progress of little more than a year a big local club had sprung up in Little Marley, of which Jack Crook was captain.

Having witnessed one or two strenuous games John Crook became a convert to the looking-on passion. His was always the loudest voice that urged his son's club on to victory, and his purse was ever at the service of the club.

John Crook devoured almost every article on football that was written. He read the latest news about the big professional clubs, and reading far more into the lines than was ever intended or ever existed, he began to harbour a contempt for the morality of the great winter pastime.

Though upright to the last degree in all business matters, the Marley publican held strange ideas with regard to sport and politics. In either the one or other of these he thought it perfectly legitimate to buy any advantage if it were possible to do so.

"Bribery and corruption was the watchword at the old hustings, Jack," he would sometimes say to his son; "and you don't mean to tell me politicians have grown too scrupulous to employ such methods now. They do it in a more open way, that's all."

The charges brought against a great Manchester football player and his separation, therefore, had made a tremendous impression upon John Crook.

Everything ain't fair and above-board in football, as he would mutter to himself, he watched the game; "and if our side play the fair game, and I other side don't, we're bound to get licked in the long run."

This view he would repeat to his son Jack on a Sunday, and Jack would burst into a roar of laughter.

"You're incorrigible, dad!" he would say. "As if there is any cheating and arranging of results in the amateur game. We are in for the County Cup, and Marley stands as good a chance of winning it as any other club in the competition; but if we do win, it won't be by hook or by crook."

Jack's father, however, remained unconvinced. His forehead was puckered with worry as the lines of the cup-notice came. Marley won their game in the first and second rounds, having only one goal scored against them in the three, and they had to meet Kirky, and it was the stiffest task they had

to face. Kirky were holders of the County Cup. They had won their way through the first and second rounds without having a goal scored against them.

Old John Crook was thinking over this as he sucked away at his pipe on this Sunday afternoon in early January, when the snow lay four inches thick upon the roads outside, and the fields, clothed in their mantle of white, stretched as far away as the eye could see, dotted with trees, whose tracery of boughs were picked out in feathery white; the most beautiful of fairy landscapes, and seasonable withal.

Jack Crook leaned lazily back on the couch in the bow window, reading a Sunday newspaper, in which were detailed the big professional games of the day before.

The boy was a fine, upstanding lad of nineteen, a miniature Hercules in his way; a fit leader for the Marley club; a born footballer, who, by precedent and example, had turned a team of microcritias into an eleven that would trouble even the famous Kirky club.

"Jack," said John Crook, suddenly putting his pipe down, "what's the name of the referee who's officiating in the Cup-tie?"

"Mr. Edgar Mason, dad," answered the boy. "He's one of the best referees in his class. We're lucky to have him. I can tell you. He won't be favouring Kirky, anyway."

"Won't be favouring them, eh, laddie?"

"No, father. I'm above all that sort of thing. One might call him the 'Incorruptible.'"

John Crook wagged his head slowly.

He was very thoughtful for the rest of that afternoon, just as thoughtful at church in the evening—for though a publican, John Crook never missed evening service, leaving his assistant to look after the house—and he went to bed that night thinking of the coming match between Little Marley and Kirky, and what a mighty triumph it would be if the local boys drew the sixth of the Kirky dragon.

In the morning he strolled down to the free library, and here borrowed a copy of the "Parkhurst Directory." In the embossure of the window he read through the list of names under the letter "M." A little way down he came upon the following:

"Mason, Edgar, 34, Gilman Street."

He jotted down the name and address, and returned thoughtfully home.

"Hi, Jack," he asked, as he sat down at dinner, "does your referee live in Parkhurst?"

"Don't know what he is, dad," answered the boy. "I can't know he lives in Gilman Street. It is all I can tell you."

It was enough, too. That afternoon John Crook wrote to Mr. Edgar Mason, making an appointment for the following day at three o'clock, and hinting that the interview would result in something of his advantage.

It was a fine day for the match at Parkhurst; but John Crook loved to whirl along the road in his light buggy, drawn by one of the finest horses in the county.

At two o'clock the publican was eating a hearty luncheon in the coffee-room of the Coach's Head, at Parkhurst; at three he stood at the door of the free library, with the knocker in his hand.

A minute later he was shown into a cosy but ill-furnished room, in which a warm fire blazed. He regarded the fittings of the apartment with keen interest.

"Looks as if the party who lives here ain't burdened with a superfluous amount of the good things in this world," he murmured.

Then the door opened, and a little, keen, dark-eyed man entered. He was, perhaps, thirty years of age. His face was good-humoured in expression. His seat was light. He surveyed the visitor out of his alert, brown eyes, and smiled.

"Mr. Crook, I believe?" he said.

"The same, sir!"

"Will you please be seated? And now, sir, perhaps you will tell me why you have called, and what you want with me?"

John Crook cleared his throat. He regarded his companion closely. He had set himself a delicate task, and hardly knew how best to broach the subject.

"I dare say," he said at length, plunging deprecatorily into the stream, "that you've come across some run experiences in the course of your career, Mr. Mason?"

"I have that!" responded the other heartily. "And your letter was one of them."

"And?" the publican went on, "you wouldn't go so far as to call your profession a well-paid one?"

"It ain't!" said Mr. Mason emphatically. "Far from it!"

"The small fee you get, and the railway fare don't amount to a row of pins, John Crook continued. "I've seen some of you chaps holding the whistle off-side against one lot of forwards when they're dangerous, eh? And when they are in a legitimate position? And on-side all right for the other side when all of them are off—eh? And a nice little cheque to line your pocket with when the game is over. That pays better than fair refereeing, don't it, Mr. Mason?"

"And John Crook winked knowingly at his companion.

For a moment Mr. Mason glared angrily at him; then his expression changed, and a gentler smile wreathed his lips as he set to rubbing his hands together again.

"Well, I wouldn't deny that it's a quicker way to make a bit of money," he said; "but take the risk, Mr. Crook—there's always the risk!"

"What does it matter if you are well paid for refereeing the publican a whisper leaning over and tapping Mr. Mason on the arm.

"The bigger the risk, the bigger the fee—oh, that's the way!"

Mr. Mason actually winked.

"It depends," he said slyly. "Tell me what you want me to do, and I'll do it for you. There's the whole thing in a nutshell: Kirky's are much stronger than we are. Yet we have a choice of ground, and as you know, that makes a big difference. I don't see why our boys shouldn't win. It would be a good match for you to have your own one or twice when Kirky were dangerous, and haul them up for some superfluous infringement of the rules. For the home crowd will be with us. Then you can let our boys get through one or twice, even if they happen to be off-side, and go the same way. All this will break Kirky's heart, 'twill set my ambition on our club winning the County

Cup, Mr. Mason; and, listen, there's fifteen pounds waiting for you—three five-pound notes—if you'll just favour the weaker side a little."

Mr. Mason looked into the fire, and rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"It's difficult!" he said. "It may mean my being suspended. I don't want my name to be crossed on the list. I've always acted honourably. I've established a reputation for fair play."

"Don't think of it!" cried John Crook. "Fifteen pounds in the bank!"

"Make it twenty, and cash down," said Edgar Mason, looking up quickly, "and I'm your man!"

The publican fell to arguing, but it was no use; Mr. Mason was obdurate, and fifteen minutes later four five-pound notes were laid upon the sitting-room table, and the two men shook hands.

John Crook returned to Little Marley chuckling at his triumph. Edgar Mason bubbled over that night. Jack could never remember his father being so lively.

The old man gave him a smack on the back with a nearly knocking force.

"What do you think of your chance for the cup, lad?" he asked.

"Don't know, father," was the thoughtful reply. "I'm afraid we shall be badly beaten."

"Nonsense, lad!" was the laughing reply. "You'll beat Kirky, never fear. You're a better team than the county. I've seen you play. Gosh, won't we have a flare-up in the town that night!"

"You look upon it as a forgone conclusion, then, dad?" cried Jack, astonished.

"It is, laddie—it is!" roared the old man. "On the afternoon of the great cup-fight, Little Marley was an even bet."

Kirky and the club's supporters arrived in waggons, having started on their long journey early in the morning. The drive had been a long one, and the waggons, as they looked side to battle for a kingdom when they alighted from their decorated barracks.

As the teams were in the field; Kirky sporting plain white, Little Marley blue-and-white stripes.

Shouting and laughing gleefully, John Crook waved his hat to the teams.

Then the referee made his appearance, and whistled the teams to the centre.

He caught sight of the official, the Marley publican, and he was studying the referee. The Harris tweed knickerbocker suit was tall, slight, and about twenty-eight years of age. He was looking down at the referee, who looked like the Edgar Mason whom John Crook had seen in that little sitting-room at Parkhurst.

"They've got the wrong referee!" he yelled. "What do you mean?" growled a man from Kirky.

"Wrong referee? Why, everybody in the whole district, and the ball was set in motion. Down the field went the Kirky forwards with a rush. The Marley backs and half-backs were in a desperate and bitter struggle, in which much fine football was shown. The locals, however, seemed to be suffering from a case of nerves, and as a result much misicking was indulged in, with the result that at the end of fifteen minutes Kirky scored a goal.

John Crook sat like a man stunned. Not a word did he utter. His joy had vanished. When Kirky put on a second, and a third, and a fourth goal, the referee leading by three goals to nil, he groaned aloud.

In the second half there was a local revival. The referee laid the law upon the teams to recover their form. Then Jack Crook, at centre-forward, scored, with a thirty-yards drive, which was the only goal that was put on the second goal from a penalty, and fifteen minutes from time, Jack got a third.

As he was sending his way out of the ground, he was met across a little, rotund, good-humoured man. His face was familiar. In a moment John Crook had him by the collar.

"You soundred!" he cried. "I've a good mind to hand you over to the police! I've got evidence of conspiracy to defraud. You refused to referee another man. Give me back my twenty pounds!"

The little man wrenched himself free, and stood staring at the publican.

"Governor," he said, "it wasn't my fault. I can't help having the same name as my first cousin, who lives in the same street. I was born there. Edgar Mason, leather merchant, of Parkhurst, that's me. I got your name in the Home Office register, and I waited until I saw you! At first, I thought you were mad. Then I thought you'd better have a lesser one than the publican. All you'll get me twenty pounds back from me, unless you want me to tell the whole county that you tried to bribe a referee."

"Well, you're right. You'd better say no more about it. Beside, I can do with the brass!"

Crook said no more. His secret had better be kept, he decided.

He had his compensation later on, when Little Marley, Kirky fairly and squarely on their own ground.

THE END.

(Don't miss next week's splendid complete tale.)

OUR CRICKET LEAGUE.

ALL ABOUT YOUR EDITOR'S GREAT OFFER TO JUNIOR CRICKET CLUBS AND COMPETITIONS.

SILVER CUPS FOR CRICKET LEAGUES.

Your Editor is prepared to present a Number of Solid Silver Challenge Cups...

The following are the conditions under which the medals will be given...

THIS FORM FOR CRICKET LEAGUES ONLY. Name of League, Year of Formation, Number of Clubs in League...

CUPS FOR UNATTACHED JUNIOR CLUBS.

Two Solid Silver Challenge Cups (Senior and Junior) offered to bona-fide Cricket Clubs...

Rules and Regulations.

- (a) Only clubs which have been established at least one season (inclusive of 1909) are eligible for entry...
(b) Those clubs have two or more teams, only the senior team members will play...

THIS FORM FOR SINGLE UNATTACHED CLUBS ONLY.

Name of Club, Playing Ground, Age of Members, Colours, Address...

OUR LEAGUE CORNER.

Tables showing the positions of the top clubs in connection with THE BOYS' REALM Football League. Includes tables for North London, South London, Scots, Irish, and Manchester & District leagues.



TEDDY LESTER'S STORY.

A Long Installment of John Finmore's Rollicking New School Story.

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ARE: TEDDY LESTER, a bright, fun-loving pup at Slapton school...

On the first day of the new term, Teddy and his chums plan a lark at the expense of the Bedlington Club...

The Slapton first Rugby fifteen play a match with a famous amateur team called the Barbarians...

Now the Bat Saw. No sooner did the door of No. 8 click behind Maine...

through the school like wildfire, and there was innumerable roaring...
"Someone's gone gabbling," said Maine. "He's got a jolly good notion that I had a share in the feed that night...

"All right," said Teddy. "I'll talk to Jim. If the day Maine sought out Teddy and told him that Chertion had suspicions as to Maine's conduct on the night of the raid..."

"Go on keeping out," said Teddy. "He's a peach," said Jim. "I don't think it will be a bad plan to let us know at once..."

"They need to be," said Teddy. "The school is just about fed up with that sort of nonsense, and it's going to be stopped..."

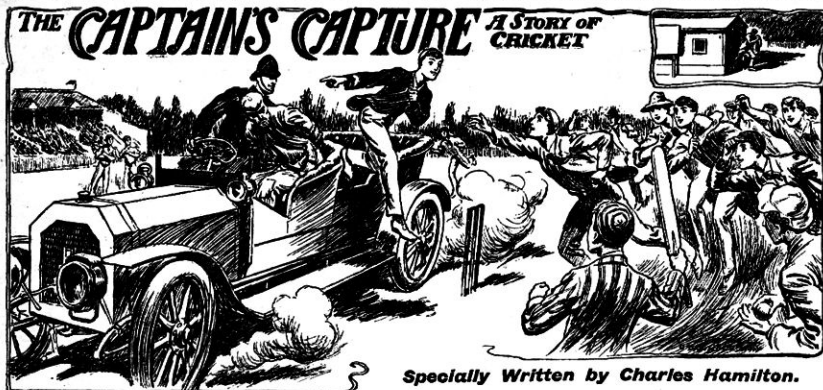
It fell to the Bat to discover the new quarters of the Bedlington Club, and he discovered them by a rather odd fashion. One day, after a game of football which ended in a soaking down-pour, he very unwisely, was slow in changing...

He had looked through the window a good deal, but now he thrust his head out and glanced directly below.

"He's nine times!" cried half a dozen roared voices. "But he can't! Six is the regular number, and he isn't allowed to go beyond it!"

Everybody was silent, and Maine crawled into bed. No one could see his face, and there was a glint of a grin on it...

Through his glasses he was long-sighted, and he had seen the face of Chertion pop up over the side of the window...



Spocially Written by Charles Hamilton.

Straight on to the ground the motor-car dashed and pulled up in the centre of the pitch. The players swarmed around as Hadley jumped out. "We've captured the thief," he shouted excitedly.

THE 1st CHAPTER.
The Briskly Cricketers

"UP!"

Tom Hadley looked down at his wicket. He certainly was "out."

The off-stump was reclining at an angle of forty-five degrees, and the balls were on the ground, and there was a murmur of disappointment from the fellows in front of the Briskley pavilion.

For Hadley was skipper of the Briskley team, and his followers had expected better things of him than that. He had knocked up 8 runs, and so would have been nearer the mark. His wicket was down to the bowling now, however, and there was nothing for him to do but to carry out his bat.

Briskley were playing South Hill, and it was not much of a match to them. They had expected to knock the weaker team out with an innings to spare, but the fall of their skipper's wicket altered the aspect of things.

Hadley made a grimace as he came up with his bat under his arm and met the glances of his friends. The South Hill field were looking very pleased with themselves, of course; but the pleasure was all on their side. Briskley were down.

"Hard cheese, Hadley," said Ted Morgan, slapping the Briskley skipper on the shoulder.

"And that wasn't a difficult ball, either, was it as I could see."

"That's the man in it," said Hadley. "You go in, Myers. Then be outside to Ted Morgan."

"Yes, it was hard luck, and no mistake. I'm not feeling fit to-day, and that's a fact. That's how it was."

Morgan looked anxious.

"I say, old chap, you're not going to get knocked up just before the Pilkington match, are you?"

Hadley laughed.

"That's all right, Ted. I shall be all serene before next Saturday. Don't worry. It's only that I feel a bit queer to-day."

"You've been looking off-colour for the past few weeks, though," said Morgan—"as if you had something on your mind, old chap."

"Stuff!" said Hadley, his face coloured.

"I'll get in out of the sun, and have a rest. This won't make any difference; we shall walk over to the Hill and trouble Hadley more than that."

"Oh, yes, I suppose so."

Hadley went into the pavilion. The rest of the team were watching the game. Myers, at the wicket, was doing very well, and the South Hill bowlers could not touch him. Yet Myers' at any other time was nothing like the skipper.

Ted Morgan looked worried. He was Hadley's best chum; they had been at the same school, and worked in the same office together.

For some time past he had guessed that Hadley had some "root" on his mind, but Hadley had never confided in him. True, there was one matter which was worrying all the Briskley cricketers; but then, there was no reason why it should trouble Hadley more than the rest.

It was that there had been an accession of the boys to the pavilion, and nearly every member of the club had lost something at some time, and the thief had never been discovered. The only hope he had seen going to crack up—for there was no reason why Hadley specially should worry over it. He couldn't be expected to take the dressing-rooms while he was at the wicket, of course.

"Old Hadley seems off-colour," Morgan remarked to the fellow standing next to him.

"Only hope he isn't going to crack up—for the Pilkington match as much as for his own sake."

Myers looked at him.

"He's seemed pretty well worried for some time," he remarked.

"Yes, I've noticed it."

"So have I, and others."

There was something so peculiar in Ponsobny's tone that Morgan looked at him quickly. Ponsobny was not on the lost of terms with Hadley. The reason was simple. Hadley was employed in the office of Ponsobny's father in Briskley. Ponsobny had expected his superiority of social position to be recognised on the cricket-field, which, of course, from a cricket point of view, was absurd.

In the Briskley office Hadley treated Ponsobny with the civility and respect due to his employer's son. On the cricket-ground Hadley was captain, and had to be treated as captain. There had been friction, but Hadley's quiet determination had carried the day, and Ponsobny, who was not by any means a bad fellow in the main, had abandoned the impossible position he had taken up, and it had left him feeling sore.

"What are you getting at?" asked Morgan abruptly. "You—"

"Well hit!" exclaimed Ponsobny. "It was a good hit from Myers. The ball had gone on its travels, and was sorted out from the crowd of spectators who were watching the game, after converting a 'old gentleman's' hit at into something like a concertina. The ball was thrown back, while 4 went up for Briskley."

Ted Morgan cheered the hit; but he did not allow Ponsobny to elude the subject he had raised. As the bowling recommenced, he looked at Ponsobny.

"Now, what did you mean?" he said. "Have you got something up against old Hadley?"

"Of course not! I only said he had been troubled over something for some weeks. Just about long as the thefts from the pavilion have been going on, in fact."

"Oh, that's all! You think he's worrying over 'em?"

"I don't see that he's any more responsible than the rest of us. A cricket captain can't be supposed to be a policeman, too."

Ponsobny laughed.

"Never mind, he said; 'let it drop.'"

"Blessed if you understand you, Tom!" Ponsobny cried.

"Well, let it drop, as I said."

And Ponsobny walked away whistling, leaving Ted Morgan very perplexed and disatisfied state of mind.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
Black Snapper.

"**P**HREW!"

Myers uttered the exclamation. He was in his shirt-sleeve in the dressing-room, and about to put his jacket on. He had felt in a pocket of it, and there he had found the garment at arm's-length, and stared at it.

The other fellows stared at him.

The match was over, and Briskley, in spite of the skipper's failure to score, were easy winners. Hadley was putting on his things, looking satisfied enough. He was sat at all a contented fellow, and so long as his side won, he was content to have played a second fiddle himself.

"What's the matter, Myers?"

"The thief's been here again!"

"Great Scott!"

"The last time you lost!"

"A leather purse!" said Myers, looking dismayed. "I know I oughtn't to have left it here after my hand-picked defence, but I was thinking about the lock. Look here, this is serious! My whole week's screw was in that purse. I had it this morning when I left the work early. Two pounds!"

"My hat!"

There were exclamations of anger from the Briskley fellows. They looked back at the dressing-room, and further exclamations showed that further losses were discovered. Some had lost money, some watches, some

articles of jewellery. It was a wider sweep than had ever been made before by the unknown thief.

"My word," said Ted Morgan, "this is getting a bit too thick! I have been getting making a scandal about it, but we shall have to have the police in now."

Hadley looked worried. Ponsobny smiled in a curious way.

"Hadley's against that," he remarked.

"You know my reason," said Hadley, in a troubled tone. "How the thief gets into the place beats me! There's only one door he could enter by without being seen, and that's locked with a Yale lock. If we called in the police they would jump to one conclusion at once."

"That the thief was among ourselves?"

"Yes."

"That's utter rot," said Myers. "but that's what they'd think. It does look like it, if we didn't know one another too well to suspect such a thing."

"Then how do you account for it?" demanded Ponsobny.

Hadley shook his head.

"I know it after all. I suspected that groundman who was discharged for drunkenness—Stanson—but—"

"How would any thief get in, if you come to that? Yet he did get in. I suspected Stanson because there was a theft before he left, and it was pretty near that he was guilty, though we didn't push the matter. He would know his way about here, and perhaps—"

"But Stanson has left the neighbourhood."

"Yes, so I hear."

"He hasn't been seen near Briskley for months."

"You fellows!" broke in a voice, as the South Hill captain looked in. "Is this a funny joke, or what?"

"Is what a joke?" asked Ponsobny.

"Somebody's been through our pockets and cleared them out while we've been on the field."

Hadley flushed uncomfortably.

"We're awfully sorry," he said. "The same thing's happened here. There's a thief who's visited this pavilion several times before. Have you lost much?"

"About everything," said the other grimly.

"We shall make the loss good, unless the things are recovered," said Hadley quickly.

"The club stands to lose it."

"Ain't it, that's all right. It's rotten, though."

The South Hill skipper turned away. There was a dead silence among the Briskley fellows.

"That means a new loss for the club," said Ponsobny. "We've had this sort of thing before. Will the funds stand it?"

"The funds will have to stand it. We shall have to have a whip-round, if it takes our last shilling."

"We can't let our guests be robbed, I suppose."

"I suppose not. I think the thief ought to be stopped."

"So's the good of saying that? We all think so, but how? That is the question?"

"We'll discuss that when the South Hill fellows are gone. We don't want too much scandal if we can help it."

Ponsobny's words made an unpleasant impression. Not a word more was said on the subject, however, till after the departure of the visiting team. Then Hadley, in his direct way, came to the point.

"You seem to have an idea that you can find the thief, Ponsobny. If you can, out with it, and we'll all be grateful," he said.

"Not exactly that. But I think we ought to come down to facts, and not beat about the bush."

"Plain English, please."

"Very well, then," said Ponsobny sharply. "It's no good blinking the fact that the thief is in the team."

"What?"

"You heard what I said."

"You can't think so! In the team! Nonsense!"

"I don't think it's nonsense. You can talk about discharged groundmen if you like. I know jolly well the thief was in the pavilion, and hasn't left it."

"Then the loot is still here," said Morgan quickly.

Ponsobny smiled unpleasantly.

"That's more likely to have been passed out of a window to a servant than anything else."

"Out with it! Whom do you suspect?"

"That's not a fair question. I want you all to say the name of the thief in the team. I'm certain of that. Now, he was at work during this match. He had the pavilion to himself. We can't expect the scorer to be looking out for thieves. But, as it happened, Hadley was first out—quite unexpectedly. He came into the pavilion. It looks as if he was here in the morning, going on. Did he see anything of the thief?"

"I didn't," said Hadley.

"Did you see any one in any part of the pavilion you couldn't see?"

"Not to notice it."

A dead silence followed Hadley's words. Ted Morgan clenched his fist convulsively as he realised what Ponsobny meant. Hadley did not get realisation it.

"That's it," said Ponsobny.

"I don't see it helps us much," said Hadley. "We—"

"He broke off, as the strange, strange silence seemed to strike him. "I—"

"What are all you fellows staring at me like that for? What do you mean? You don't mean to say that you suspect—"

"Brother!"

"We don't," said Ted Morgan. "Don't be an idiot, Tom. As if any one could be cad enough to suspect you?"

"I don't know how to say it, but I will write."

"Ponsobny does," he said. "So do you, Myers."

"I don't," stammered Myers. "But—but can't you explain?"

"I've nothing to explain. If you think I'm a thief, you've got a determination to give."

"No heroics, please," broke in Ponsobny, in his cutting voice. "Let's have this matter out. You can't deny that you've had a trouble on your mind for the past few weeks, Hadley. You've shown it plainly enough on the cricket-field, and I've seen it in the office, and so has Morgan."

"I don't deny it."

"More than that," went on Ponsobny, raising his voice. "I think I'm justified in saying out plainly what I know."

"Say anything you like."

"Well, you know your young brother has been in trouble, for something of the same sort I know, and I know your father about my father about it. Young Willy Hadley has been sick in London; you know what for."

"Say anything you like."

Hadley's face was like a stone.

"Can't you say anything, Hadley?" exclaimed Jones at last.

"I can't say anything, I'm in a low, broken voice."

"It's true about young Will. He got into the hands of a set of betting scoundrels, and they got me into a bit of trouble. I was a fool, and he never was dishonest. I believe he was dragged; but if his employer hadn't been a kind man, he would have been hung for life for what he did. I admit it, and Ponsobny's welcome to what satisfaction he gets out of spreading it."

Ponsobny flushed scarlet.

"I'd be the last to mention it," he cried. "only it lets in light on this matter. I think you ought to have some satisfaction to give. I know that young Willy Hadley paid his employer back thirty pounds. Where did he get it?"

"You can guess."

"Of course, I guess; you sent it to him, to save him. But where did you get it, since you're calling it a gift? I only did a foolish thing."

"I hope it was," said Ponsobny. "I don't call it a gift. I only did a detective ought to be called in, and the facts placed before him."

Hadley put his jacket on.

"Do as you like. I'm done with this club!"

Ted Morgan caught him by the arm.

"Can't be going, Hadley."

"Yes, I'm rot, stuff, piffle, bosh!" cried the young skipper energetically. "Do you think I'm a fool's word of it?"

"The others do."

Morgan's eyes flashed round the room.

"You seem to have an idea, I won't say, in a club where my best chum's called a thief."

"You can't!" exclaimed Myers hotly. "Have you seen the Pilkington match next Saturday? You can't leave us in the lurch."

"Hang the match!"

"If you're going to desert us—"

"I'm not going to desert the club," said Hadley quietly. "Stick to the club. This may all come right. If the thief's found, I'll join the club; if you're not, I'll join the club. Myers—"

"You're going to play on Saturday."

"Do you want a thief to play?"

"Don't be a fool! It's not proved; it looks

bad, but I don't believe it, for one. We'll try to find the thief. Meanwhile—"
 "I can't do it! Trust me, and I'll play. Let me play in a side that thinks me a thief, or possibly a crook. If I can't do it, I'll walk out."
 And Tom Hadley, with his head held very high, walked out.

THE 3RD CHAPTER. Under a Cloud.

HADLEY kept to his word. He had not moved from the Brisley Club, and it was open to Ponsoby to bid to call on the detectives if he wished, but he did not. He offers up to him too strongly. Suspicious if he was true, was back against the skipper. He had sent money to his brother as the same time that the theft was made. He was not a thief, but a victim; but there was no doubt that he had done what the law called stealing, whether a thief or not. If there was one thief in a family there might be another. That was how Ponsoby reasoned it out. He did not stop to think what a difference there was between young Billy Hadley—a weedy, self-willed youth, given to smoking cigarettes, and hanging about music-halls, and his older brother, who had been a cricketer, and one of the best cricketers outside the county club.

Tom Hadley had stood by his miserable relative in the time of distress; that did not show that he had the same tendencies himself. He had been already prejudiced. And certainly many small circumstances had combined to throw suspicion upon the captain. His own suspicion of the long-gone dim memory of the cricket ground, looking like a blind to throw the others off the scent. Stanon had not been seen near Brisley since his dismissal. It seemed clear that the thief must be in the team, that most of the fellows had come to agree with Ponsoby on the point. And if he were guilty, he would be guilty, the finger of suspicion necessarily pointed to Hadley. Against the others, there were no grounds at all.

As a matter of fact, the Brisley fellows thought it over, but they could not make up their minds. It looked like a certainty against Hadley, but then they were not sure of the frank face and genial manners of their old captain, they could not believe that he was a thief.

Ponsoby had been induced to drop his idea of calling in the police. There was a substantial amount of money, and the scandal would have been too great. Even if the skipper had been guilty, they would rather have dropped the matter, and dropped him, than have the investigation, and then they to discover the truth? And then there was the Pilkington match.

That was the most important match of the season to Brisley, and they had counted upon a good struggle and a good chance of victory. Without the best batsman, and the great advantage which a good captain means to a team, they had little hope of pulling off the match.
 "That or no thief, Hadley must play, or else they might as well make up their minds to a walk-over for the visiting team."
 And as Hadley was detained in county, he was out of the club; and even Ted Morgan could not prevail upon him to take a different view.
 "Heads! But Brisley before the match. Ted looked in at Hadley's rooms in the evening to make a final appeal. He found the late captain of Brisley in a gloomy mood. He, too, was thinking of the woor's match; he was just as troubled as anybody at the idea of the visitors walking over his home side.
 "He looked up miserably enough at Ted.
 "Feeling rotten?" asked Morgan.
 Hadley nodded.

"You're rotten! I say, I think it would be best after all to have the detectives on the matter, as Ponsoby suggested."
 "I don't want to hear of that about that. We want you to play to-morrow, Tom."
 Hadley smiled faintly.
 "I don't want to go before, Ted."
 "Well, I say so again. Will you play?"
 "You've had my answer."
 "Want you to say no to me. We've been chum's long time, Tom, and I think you might do it for my sake, if not for the club's."

Hadley visibly hesitated.
 "Can't you see," said Morgan, encouraged by the signs of yielding in his friend's face. "You don't want the club to be kicked hollow, and more than I do."
 "Of course I don't."
 "Then play."
 "You suspect me of being a thief, Ted."
 "They're more than suspect you of being a good batsman," said Morgan. "Never mind the other stuff. I'll give you £100, and get on your dirty next week, if you like! Be a sportsman, old chap."

Hadley laughed.
 "Well, I suppose I can play, if you all really want me," he said. "I don't want to leave the club in the lurch."
 "That's all right," exclaimed Morgan joyfully. "I'll tell 'em."
 "But, of course, it's understood that after this I resign for good. I'm out of the club, and I'll never speak in the street to any chap who can't say out plainly that he believes in me."
 "But that all right—the thief will be discovered, I hope, and all will be cleared up anyway. This next week, over the Pilkington match. We shall kick 'em."

And Ted Morgan hurried off to tell the news to the anxious cricketers.
 It was received with general satisfaction. Both Tom Hadley and his friend the Brisley fellows were glad to see face Pilkington—or anybody! Even Ponsoby had to acknowledge that Hadley was wanted.
 All Ponsoby's fellows were bright and early upon the ground for the match—but Hadley! He had not arrived on the ground. Was he going to fail them after all? The fellows asked themselves anxiously, as the hand of the clock struck round.

Pilkington were there, in fine form. Their skipper came over to Myers, looking a little "pinch."
 "Time," he remarked. "Isn't your skipper here?"
 Myers looked worried.
 "No, He's been delayed, I suppose. Have you any idea where he can be, Morgan?"
 Morgan shook his head.
 "Morgan! Had the morning off at the office, same as I did. He ought to have been here. I can't think what's delayed him. If Williams would let me see his list—"
 The Pilkington captain nodded.
 "Make it another ten minutes."
 "Right," said Myers.

The minutes ticked away. The Brisley fellows looked out anxiously for Hadley. He had not yet come. He was late. He was late to fear that the captain had changed his mind about playing after all, and had left the side in the lurch. It was hard to believe that the tanno, as the last minute ticked away, came a sudden sound.
 Zip! Zip!

THE 4TH CHAPTER. Captured!

AS A MATTER OF FACT, was Hadley? A skipper had intended to be early on the cricket-ground. But he was in a gloomy mood, and did not feel like his usual self. A walk in the fresh fields before the match seemed to him the best way of getting in the mood, and he had turned his back upon dusty Brisley and gone into the green country. A quiet stroll in the fresh air soon put him in the mood he wanted, and he had turned his back upon dusty Brisley and gone into the green country. A quiet stroll in the fresh air soon put him in the mood he wanted, and he had turned his back upon dusty Brisley and gone into the green country. A quiet stroll in the fresh air soon put him in the mood he wanted, and he had turned his back upon dusty Brisley and gone into the green country.

There was a foot-loot from a motor-car as he turned out of the lane into the road. He had looked up—it was Mr. Ponsoby, his employer, in the car—his own going towards Brisley. Hadley threw up his hand without stopping to think, and the motorist slowed down.
 "Ah, it's you, Hadley!" he said. "Oughn't you to be in your ground by this time!"
 "Yes, sir; like an ass I've allowed myself to get late. Could you give me a lift as far as the gates?"
 "Certainly." Jump in!" said Mr. Ponsoby cordially. He knew nothing of the late happenings in the Brisley Club, and he shall pass the gates, and let you go there."
 "Thank you, sir—you're very kind!"
 Not at all! Jump in!"

And the car started in motion again, with the cricket captain sitting beside the motorist. Hadley felt greatly relieved.
 The car slackened down as it drew near the ground. There were a good many people on the road, going to the ground to see the big match, and Hadley saw the high palings of the ground, at the end behind the pavilion, across the fields. He was looking in that direction, when a sharp cry, and his face changed, and he uttered a sharp cry.
 Mr. Ponsoby looked at him.
 "Anything wrong, Hadley?"
 Hadley was not, excitedly pointing.
 "Stop sir! Oh, stop! Look!"
 Mr. Ponsoby stopped the car in blank amazement. His glance followed.
 Then he uttered a startled exclamation.
 From the car the Brisley ground a man was the very act of dragging it. It was at a spot shaded by trees and a high hedge, and had not Hadley been in the car he would never have observed it.
 "The pavilion thief!" cried Hadley, his eyes blazing.
 There could be no doubt about it. The man was leaving the ground behind the pavilion by climbing the wall, and there could be only one plan—
 "It's the thief, sir!" explained Hadley hurriedly. "And, by Jove, I know him! It's the rascal Stanon, and now his face."
 "By Jove," exclaimed Mr. Ponsoby excitedly. "Jump out! You cut round the field and head him off, and I'll get this man. The man by the gate yonder. I'll run on and call him."
 Hadley was already out of the car.
 He had seen the direction the thief was making for, and he aimed to head him off. As Hadley came to the gates, he saw that the two almost ran into one another. The pavilion

thief stopped, his face going white as he caught sight of the face and the blazing eyes of Hadley.
 "You scoundrel, I've got you!"
 The man sprang away, and ran.
 There was no match for the best runner in the Brisley Cricket Club.
 Hadley was after him like a shot. Closer and closer his footsteps pounded on the grass. His head was bent, his eyes were fixed, and Stanon doubled, and ran off towards the road.
 Hadley dashed after him again. He caught sight of a policeman's helmet over the hedge, and yelled:
 "Stop thief!"
 A policeman in a busy form showed in a gap of the hedge. The thief, with a curse, halted, and then Hadley sprang upon him. They went to the ground together with a crash.
 The rascal struggled desperately; but Hadley pinned him down, and the policeman dashed through the hedge and came to his aid.
 But Stanon was already a prisoner.

On the ground lay a couple of watches and a bundle of garments he had dropped in the struggle—proof, if any was needed, of his guilt. The constable dragged his hands behind him, and snatched the handcuffs on his wrists.
 "It's all right, sir," he grunted, as Hadley rose, gasping, in his arms. Mr. Ponsoby was waiting at the ground, sir; he sent me here. We've got him. I may as well take care of these things. He picked up the stolen articles the thief had dropped. "I desay he's got a lot more on him. What's this, too—a Yale key?"
 "By Jove," gasped Hadley, "that's how the scoundrel got into the pavilion, without leaving a trace behind. He must have stolen that key when he was employed there. Bring him on, constable. I want him taken to the ground. There have been a lot of these thefts, and the fellows suspected somebody else. I want to show them the thief, now he's caught."
 "I'll bring him, sir."

They hustled the captured thief through the hedge. The car was there, and the rascal—who had begun to struggle again, was plumped into the prisoner's mood. He rather appealed to Hadley's fancy to take the captured thief right into the ground, and show the truth to everyone there in a way that could not be questioned.
 And so the car did not halt at the gates.
 "Keep on!" exclaimed Hadley.

Hadley's eyes were blazing with delight now. The Brisley captain was cleared.
 And in his present mood he rather appealed to Hadley's fancy to take the captured thief right into the ground, and show the truth to everyone there in a way that could not be questioned.
 And so the car did not halt at the gates.
 "Keep on!" exclaimed Hadley.

"Right in, sir!"
 "Yes, right on the ground."
 The constable grunted, and the motor-car dashed on, with a zip-zip and a cloud of dust. There was a shout from the Brisley cricketers:
 "There! That's Hadley!"
 "What does it mean?"
 Right up behind the wicket dashed the car. Hadley was with a zip-zip and a cloud of dust, and the rest were rushing forward.
 "Hadley, what does this mean?"
 "What's the thief?"
 "What?"
 "There's the thief! He's been in the pavilion again!"
 And there was an exclamation from Myers. He had just been in the pavilion for something, and had found his watch-chain gone. He came out with a blank face.
 "The thief's been here again— Hallo! Who's that?"
 "That's Hadley," laughed Hadley. "And I expect you'll find all that's missing about him. His pockets are stuffed. It's Stanon, you see. I've brought him here to show you. He can go to the police-station now."
 "Hurrah!" roared Morgan, tossing his cap into the air. "Dialn't I tell you silly chumps in the 'Hurrah!"
 Ponsoby looked glum for a moment. His companions were looking at him very anxiously. But Ponsoby was true blue at bottom, and, after a few moments of chagrin and silence, he stopped, and with outstretched hand.
 "I'm sorry, Hadley," he said. "I can't say more. I'm sorry for this, and for the trouble and worry it has been to you before. If you like to shake hands—"

Hadley gripped his hand.
 "That's all right. By-gones are by-gones. I say, chaps, we're keeping Pilkington waiting. The game's the thing!"
 And it was time. The car shortened away, and Mr. Ponsoby gave the policeman and his prisoner a lift as far as Brisley police-station. Meanwhile, the match commenced. And, though tired at that match was, there was never any doubt from the beginning which way it would go.
 For Hadley was in wonderful form; he surprised even those who knew him best. The relief, after his recent troubles, seemed to have made a new man of him. And when Brisley proved victors in the match by 50 runs, the Brisley fellows cheered him to the pavilion, and sang rousing cheers—and the loudest cheer of all came from Ponsoby.

THE END.
 (Another cricket yarn next week.)

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THE AUSTRALIAN CRICKET TEAM OF 1909.

By J. N. FENTLEW. (Continued from last week.)

Charles George Macartney, New South Wales,

a little fellow, and one of the youngest men in the team—23 in age when he was first selected...

Peter A. McAllister, Victoria.

born in 1869; ought to have been chosen for our team. Has played for his State since 1886-9, in which season he made 224 runs...

Montague Alfred Noble, New South Wales

35, captain of the team, and the leading figure in the Australian cricket to-day. First played for his State in 1891-2, and since that time has been a great man in Test cricket...

John Aloysius O'Connor, South Australia,

but born in and brought out by New South Wales. Well over 30. Had a chance in his native State's team at end of season 1904-5, and in Tasmania and Queensland...

Vernon Mansford, Victoria,

only 24, but already bids fair to rival Trumper, Lisle Carlock, Hartigan, and Bardsley, made his first appearance in big cricket five seasons ago...

Victor Thomas Trumper, New South Wales,

31, the most brilliant and versatile batsman Australia has ever produced. Has made five centuries in Test matches. Three times in England in 1899, and once in 1902...

W. J. Whitty, South Australia nominally,

but like O'Connor, New South Wales by birth. Something of a specialist. The best of his left-hand bowler besides Macartney, and Whitty was chosen on promise rather than performance...



The Young Cricketer

By J. B. HOBBS (Surrey Eleven).

A Special Series of Instructive Articles, Written Exclusively For THE BOYS' REALM by the Popular Surrey Cricketer.

For health's sake, I would strongly urge my young readers to wear flannel shirt in preference to those of the canvas variety. You are absolutely certain to become chilled on one time or another when playing cricket...

Flannel is Always Safe.

Next, I advise the purchase of a sweater, which should be put on immediately after a lively innings or some heavy practice...

If it is possible, purchase your own bat, and never attempt to use an old one. Know that a good bat will cost a great amount of pocket-money, but it will pay you in the end...

When buying a bat, don't take the first cheap one that comes to hand. Above all, find out the size you require, and be very careful not to choose one that is even half a size too big...

It has been said that Dr. E. M. Grace spoils his whole cricket career through practicing when he was very young with a bat which was much too big for him...

As to weight, choose one with which you feel you can do as you like. The weight is just what you require, and it is not your weight that is one which you can flourish about without feeling awkward...

At the same time, it isn't so easy, and light enough to flourish with, well-balanced bat will seem to be lighter than a heavy-batted one...

If you constantly use the same bat, and it suits your strength, you will, as you will easily understand, be very much quicker in making your strokes;

in fact, you will experience a really delicious sense of freedom after using the great things that are, as a rule, bought for club use; but remember that it must be exactly right as to size, and light enough to flourish without any tax on your strength.

Regarding pads and gloves, there can be no harm in using those which belong to the club. Boys' clubs seldom purchase pads, and if they are too large, they will, of course, be a great hindrance in running, and tend to make a batsman awkward in his play generally.

However, I think I have dwelt sufficiently long upon those things which I call "essentials," and next should be devoted to batting. It is my intention to do very simply, but very carefully, into defensive strokes, scoring strokes, fast bowling, slow bowling, and the next chapter will be devoted to youthful captains before the completion of the series.

If any of my readers are in doubt about some of my explanations, I cordially invite them to write to me, and I will do my best to put them right; but every letter must be addressed to the Editor of THE BOYS' REALM, with "J. B. Hobbs" written at the top left-hand corner. Replies will be made at the end of each article about three weeks after the letters reach me.

Yours truly, J. B. Hobbs

THE CLOSE SEASON. HOW BIG PROFESSIONAL CLUBS SECURE NEW TALENT.

Practice Matches.

THE "May 1st" season commences when, according to the laws of the English F.A., no football may be played. All club matches between clubs will be played. All club matches from May 1st to August 31st in each year, although after August 15th practice and professional matches between the same club may be played.

It is during April and the following months that the big professional clubs begin to recruit their first and second teams. The men who have done well, and satisfied the directors, are maintained, provided they assent to this arrangement, and the others whose are not wanted, and those who are wanted, but won't stay—are transferred to other clubs.

Registration of Professionals.

Any league sanctioned by the English Football Association may provide its rules for a system whereby a player may be retained, or a transfer fee demanded, after the end of a season's engagement, and this provision is made, for the first time, so as to provide that a player, if professional, cannot be retained at the end of the season without payment of wages or the value of reasonable terms of re-engagement, or, if amateur, without being signed regularly.

Every professional player has to be registered on a special form supplied by the F.A. Each form, after all particulars have been filled in, including the date of signature, must be signed by the first or second league, and returned to the secretary of the F.A. within five days of such signature.

There is no more rigid observer of the Sabbath than the governing body of football. Sunday matches are prohibited, as everywhere else. Not only is this provision made, but professional registration forms signed on a Sunday are not valid, and it is an offence for a club to sign a player on a Sunday. The signing of a second registration form before the council have declared the first form invalid is also an offence. Clubs and players to be dealt with very sternly for these irregularities.

The Transfer Form.

When a player is being transferred from one club to another, Form H. of the F.A. has to be filled in, and the following is a facsimile of Form H.:

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION. Form H. (Rules 29 and 32.)

Form for Transfer of a Professional from One Club to Another of the Football Association. I am at present a professional of the ... Club, and Registered by the ... Association. I hereby request the special Permission of the Council of the Football Association to be transferred to the ... Club.

Signature of Player. ... Postal Address. ...

I desire the transfer of ... from ... Club, to ... Club. ... Secretary. ... Address. ...

I assent to ... being transferred from ... Club, to ... Club. ... Secretary. ... Address. ...

The registration of professionals is binding for one season only, but a professional may register himself for two seasons, or may play as a professional club during the month of April. He must not, however, enter into any engagement with another club until his existing engagement has terminated.

The Ten Pounds Bonus.

Until the period of registration of a professional player has expired he must not be approached by any club to induce him to leave the club for which he is registered when his engagement has terminated. No payment may be made to a commission agent or other persons than clubs and players concerned in transfers and engagements with the exception of a ten pounds bonus of more than ten pounds as a consideration for his signing a professional form. A bonus cannot be paid to a player on his re-signing for his own club.

Formerly there was no limit to the amount which might be paid for the transfer of players, but the rules now provide that a player must not now exceed £500. It will be remembered that a few years back Middlebrough paid the transfer fee of £1,000 to Sunningdale in order to secure the services of Alfred Common. And, seeing that he saved that club from bankruptcy, it is not surprising that there can be no doubt that he was worth it.



BEHIND PRISON WALLS.

BY GORDON ARR

THE 18th CHAPTER.

The Search for the Governor. The chaplain read the strange missive... "What do you make of it, sir?"

OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

Sentenced for Life. Sir Richard Eastbrook is found murdered in the grounds of his estate in South Devonshire... On his way to Blackland Prison with several other convicts...

The Punishment-cell.

On his arrival at Blackland, Frank is taken before the governor, Major Grimtree, and sentenced to three days' punishment-cells for his assault on Oester...

The Captain's Wardens.

Little Simpson, in a fit of frenzy, sets a light to the prison. All the convicts are marched out into the square whilst the fire brigade extinguishes the flames...

THE 17th CHAPTER.

The boy traces his himself in an awkward predicament. PUNCH MILKINS and Captain Pentwhistle had been arrested...

The reason for it they learned from a civil guard...

The civil guard inclined his head, while Mr. Pumphrey, a short, thick-set man, with a ferocious-looking moustache...

"No, I can't," said the tailor of the two. "My name's Bill Escott. My mate here is George Phipps."

"You see," said Bill Escott, "we're strangers here. There don't seem to be anybody at home as we can report ourselves to."

"Unless, mind you," struck in Bill Escott, "with the man who is imprisoned—unless, mind you, you don't do nothing."

"Well, I can't help you," broke in Surly Jim. "If you've such smart officers, you ought to be able to find your own way about."

"It's really of you to suggest that, mate. Now, is there any one of the lads as is more to be trusted than the others? Do you know

of one of the right sort, as won't take liberties, or play any tricks on us?"

"Yes, I do," Surly Jim was unbending a little. "There's No. 101. Regular folk he is. Time he goes to the cage passes to some of the screw boys. Tips several of 'em regular, getting the money somehow from outside."

"Those who do make this sort of thing may be seen to have a great deal of it goes on. Money is almost as powerful an instrument inside a prison as it is out, and warders are as corruptible—no more, and no less—as any other mixed body of men."

"No, 101, you said?" remarked Escott. "Ay, that's him! Captain Pentwhistle, his name is. Formerly of the Bloomfield Works of London. That's the sort of profession he was following when he got nabbed, and regular as clockwork he was at his work."

"There they found him engaged with a plate of oxtail soup in a way that a genuine invalid might have envied to have done."

"You're Captain Pentwhistle, ain't you?" said Bill Escott, approaching. "He was in his empty plate, scoured his monoids into his left eye, and very deliberately scanned his questioner from head to toe."

"The man's name," he said loftily; "but you have the advantage of me. I take it that you are one of the menials of the establishment."

"Bill Escott's brain was in a bit of a whirl. He was not used to the sort of address a gentleman like myself, especially without an introduction. However, let that pass. I am a martyr to a tyrannical legal system."

"My name's Bill Escott," he returned slowly. "I'm delighted to meet you," said the captain, quite affable now that the formal introduction had been made.

"The air is bracing, and gives one such an appetite as to make the quite inadequate ration of food seem correspondingly palatable."

"Ah, how do you do, George?" Pleased (Continued on the next page.)

LAST STORY-PICTURE IN OUR GREAT 15,000-PRIZE COMPETITION.

The 15,000 Prizes will include: Watches, Cameras, Telescopes, Footballs, Cricket Bats and Balls, Penknives, Boxes of Dominoes, Boxes of Draughts, Pocket Electric Lamps, Printing Outfits, Pencil Cases, etc., etc.

FINAL SET! FINAL SET!

A SIXTON BLAKE ADVENTURE (Concluded). The boys had a terrible fight with the lads. The Dict's had got out, 2/3 of the men had been sent from the... Soon the app... and the... The... were captured.

READ THIS CAREFULLY. All readers have to do is to cut out the twelve pictures that have appeared week by week in the 'The Boys' Realm'...

CLOSING DATES! MAY 15th (FOR READERS IN GREAT BRITAIN), JULY 31st (FOR COLONIAL AND FOREIGN READERS). "The Shame of St. Basil's," by Henry St. John. See "The Boys' Friend."

BEHIND PRISON WALLS.

(Continued from the previous page.)

to see you. As a whole-hearted believer in the Darwinian theory that man and apes are descended from monkeys, I am delighted to meet with a specimen that goes so far to convince one of the truth of the theory.

Warder Phipps tugged at his fierce moustache. "Look here, guv'nor," said he. "I don't know quite what you mean, but if you're getting at me—"

"Getting at you, my dear friend? No, no! But I've thought from your mind, and give me your paw—that is, hand. Now, what can you do for you?"

The captain's patronising air seemed to rile George Phipps. He looked as if he were going to get savage again.

"Don't say nothin', George," said Warder Escott, nudging him. "Don't forget he's a toff, with plenty of oot. You shall be getting quietest out of him later on."

The mention of "quietest" seemed to soothe George. He looked up and stared upward instead of downward, and actually grinned at the captain.

"We seemed to have arrived at a particular awkward moment," said he. "Everybody awakes away."

"Nearly everybody is away," said the captain. "The whole staff of warders and guards are engaged in an expedition. The occasion is unique. They are out searching for no less a person than Major Grimtree; who, as you would say, is an expert."

"So we've heard," said Bill Escott. "And that's why we've come to you. We were recommended to you on account of your thorough familiarity with the prison. We want to look round; and there being no warders to show us round, why, we thought as how you might."

Captain Pentwhistle leapt up as an invalid could have done.

"Show you round?" said he eagerly. "Why, so I will. Up to now, in spite of my varied career, I have never played the part of cicerone at a show place; but as a tourist I studied the methods of such, and I dare say I can fill the role."

A twinkle came into the captain's eye as he led the way through the ward.

"We are now in the manner of a professional guide, "in an interesting though depressing atmosphere. This is the prison infirmary, where miserable men drag out their miserable existence on a bed of straw and suddenly remembering his ostail soup—"

"strive to build up their shattered constitutions on a diet of oatmeal. Let us pass out into the sunlight. On the left you observe that part of the prison known as X. Hall. The style of architecture unknown to the present day, but far more than ornament. The thickness of its walls, and the strength of the bars over the windows are, doubtless symbols of the strength of the prison."

"One can see, at once, that place without being reminded of Hood's gloomy and depressing masterpiece. His 'Song of the Siwash' now, in England, is a well-known tale."

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"Oh, all right!" said Phipps, with a grin. "I apologise, old sport. What about this fellow you say is dangerous? Should like to see him."

"Well, I'll take you to him. But let yours be the responsibility, not mine. Remember the man is really dangerous, and must be treated gently."

"Oh, I'll treat him gently!" murmured Phipps. "Only let him come any of his tricks with me, that's all."

"Well, one day he thinks he's the Prince of Wales, another day full of the belief that he's the German Emperor; he insists on writing out orders for new battleships by the dozen. The last time I saw him he was labouring under the impression that he'd discovered the South Pole. What he'll think he is today goodness only knows. But honour him—"

"Oh, I'll honour him!" said Phipps, with a significant grip of his truncheon. "I know how to deal with that sort of case. I've got a sure cure for 'em here. You leave him to me. I'll knock the delusions out of him. If he carries on too much I'll make him believe he's a lump of putty, and he won't be so far wrong, either."

"But what sort of madness is it, George? Is he violent, or a harmless gibberer? Is he a maniac, or just a doddler in id?"

"We'll soon see," said Phipps. "Hold him, Bill, will you? Hold him while I stick a needle through the fleshy part of his leg!"

"Is that a test, George?"

"Said and said," said he. "If he bellows out when I stick the needle into him, he's a violent maniac."

"And if he don't bellow, George?"

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of says he met us last night! What do you make of that?"

"Mad," said Bill Escott laconically. "Mad, undoubtedly," said Phipps. "We must make sure of this, Bill, and report accordin'. Now, mister, who are you?"

"Who am I? I thundered the wild-eyed man before them." "Why, I'm Major Grimtree, of course! I'm the governor of Beakland Prison, as everybody in the place knows!"

Warder Phipps looked at him in amazement for one second. Then up went his apologetic face, forward went his shoulders, and the next minute both he and Warder Escott were doubled up with inextinguishable laughter.

"Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho," sargled Phipps. "Here's a go! Ever hear the like? The governor of Beakland Prison. Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho! I never heard the like in all my born days!"

"Nor yet afrom 'em, either," said Escott emphatically. "What do it mean, George?"

"He's mad, o' course—mad as a hatter, who's first cousin to a March hare."

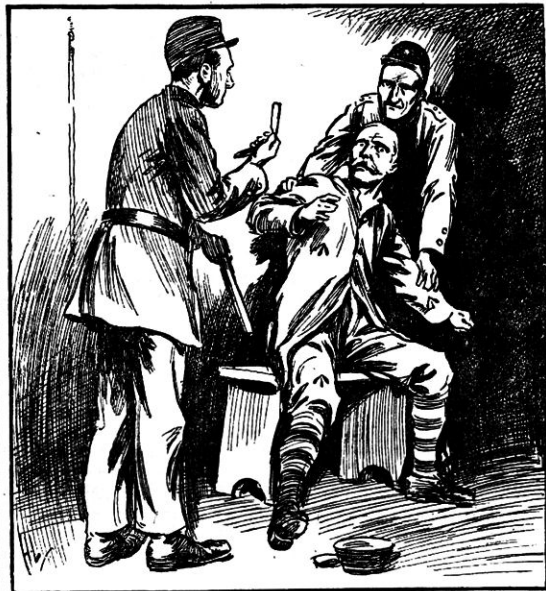
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After forcing Major Grimtree to don a suit of convict's clothes, PUNCH MILKINS subjected him to the indignity of haircut, and shaved off his moustache.

"This way, then," said Pentwhistle; and led the way into the deserted ward. He halted at one of the cell doors. "Here's the place," he said.

"Escott unlocked it and threw it open. Instantly a wild-looking, distracted figure sprang towards the door.

It was Major Grimtree, though few would have recognised him. His clean-shaven face, close-cropped head, and prison clothes made him look as desperate a lag as any man in Beakland.

He sprang towards the door, we say, and exclaimed: "So you've come at last, have you? You've let me sercan the place down for hours without coming near me? What do you mean by it—eh?"

"That's what I mean by it!" said Warder Phipps, clutching him by the collar, and sending him reeling back into the cell. "You just behave yourself, or it'll be the worse for you, mister! I'm not one to put up with any 'sanky-panky' tricks!"

"Who are you are you?" demanded Major Grimtree, catching sight of a new face. "I have never seen you before."

"I'm one of the new warders from Dartmoor, I am, and this is the office."

Major Grimtree gasped.

"The new warder?" Then you're the two villains last night, who tried to do me so shamefully, and looked me up here?"

"Well, I'm blomed, Bill!" Phipps exclaimed. "What do you think of that? One minute he says he ain't never seen us before, now he

"Why, then, he's an idiot—a blitherin' idiot of the very lowest order of hintellect! Now, then, get him!"

"You men hold him tight."

"Let me go—let me go!" cried the governor.

"If you don't, I'll— O-o-o-o-o, o-o-o-o, o-o-o-o!"

A needle had been thrust deeply into the fleshy part of Major Grimtree's leg, and instantly such a scream broke from his throat as might have been heard at a mile off.

"That settles it," said Warder Phipps, with decision. "No doubt about him now. He's a wannabe of the most violent sort. We must report accordin'. A few days low diet will do him good."

"They moved towards the door.

"Let me go! Don't look me in!" shrieked the governor. "I tell you I'm Major Grimtree. If you leave me here I'll be—"

The rest of what he said was lost, for Warder Phipps, with a grin upon his face, had slammed the door, and stood with Escott in the corridor.

"Clear out that Bill—"

THE 18th CHAPTER.
A Murmurous Situation.

APTAIN PENTWHISTLE had slipped off when the door of the governor's study opened. For he had not gone back to the infirmary.

Foreseeing some fun, he wanted someone to share it with him. One of the lads off took a bunch of keys from a place where he had concealed them, and skipped off to Punch Milkins's room.

"Punch," he whispered, as he opened the door, "want to see some sport?"

"Do I no, captin? What's the game?"

"The governor's in a bad way, the lads off, took a bunch of keys from a place where he had concealed them, and skipped off to Punch Milkins's room."

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'THE SHAME OF ST. BASIL'S.'

By HENRY ST. JOHN.

SEE

'THE BOYS' FRIEND.'

Id. EVERY TUESDAY.



A. S. HARDY'S Powerful New Football Tale.

COMMENCE THE STORY HERE.

Wrexall Bovers have fallen on bad times... Disaster has followed disaster, and the opening of our story finds them slowly but surely sinking to the bottom of the Second League table.

The Secretary's Story.

The club is deeply in debt to Mr. Hesale, a building contractor, who has constructed a grand stand for them... He has never been paid for his work, and upon making a final application, Mr. Hesale, the secretary-manager of Wrexall Bovers, gives him a cheque for a hundred pounds.

The Turn of the Tide.

The whole team is reorganised and the multitudes members are stood down for the time being... In the second round of the Cup competition they are drawn to play the club of the town.

Tom Maw.

WHAT hot bath did the track. The lad from home... recrossed from the Thames open to his eyes, and, after drawing in a deep, heartfelt sigh, he started in astonishment at the men who were surrounding him.

Then Simmons, the trainer, with his own strong arms had led out, and, after sitting him down, and a glass of brandy did the rest... "That's right, my lad," said William Sanderson, smiling at him.

"The lad, looking round, now caught sight of the old man's face... He had been impaired to it by the steaming water.

For a moment the poor fellow could not speak... "I've got no home," he muttered; "I've not father or mother. I've got no friends or savings."

"Do you know what it means to go without food, sir?" asked the boy... "Do you know what it means to sleep out on the Embankment of nights because you are too poor to get a bed in a decent inn?"

"And was that your intention when you fell into the river, sir?" asked Frank Butler sternly... "Did you do it purposely?"

"Father was killed on the railway twelve months ago," answered the boy, while his face went white, and his lips trembled... "Mother died of a broken heart and I was left alone."

"And do you mean to tell me," said Sanderson, "that you are going to be a beggar?"

"I don't know any of my relations," answered the boy... "I wouldn't expect that, desperate as I was."

"What is your name, my lad?" asked William Sanderson... "Well, Thomas Maw, said William Sanderson, smiling at him with a kindly air.

I live! You'll save me. You'll make me. I can work... I've been sent a bit of the world, and I have suffered; and you won't find me shirk. I can play football, too. I have played many a game in my time.

"Very good, sir," he said. And then he turned round to look at the lady... "Don't waste my time. We are all hungry; and the sooner we get back to Holloway, the better."

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed. "Where's Curuso? Where's our mascot?"

"Then there came a wild scream, and over the partition which separated the visitors' seats from the room, he saw scrambling the monkey, dragging his jingling chain behind him.

"I don't know any of my relations," answered the boy... "I wouldn't expect that, desperate as I was."

"What is your name, my lad?" asked William Sanderson... "Well, Thomas Maw, said William Sanderson, smiling at him with a kindly air.

"The boy stepped back a pace, and his lips quivered... He looked at Frank Butler, and at Jack Galway, and at Manager Kelly, and at Brewer, at Ainsworth, and at Gillingham, and his lips trembled.

On paper Wrexall Bovers had not a ghost of a chance. But, then, Cup-ties are Cup-ties, and often the best finishing team will manage to put a far cleverer combination of their game, snapp a goal lead, and keep their opponents from scoring anything.

Well, during that week there were serious, anxious faces when the players met on the football ground to take a ten-mile walk round the country lanes. The weather was mild. The cold snap had vanished. The sun shone. There were signs of spring to be seen on every hand.

The grass on the playing-pitch was beginning to show a fresh tint of green... The form at Fulham was convincing, as far as it went, but the play of the Bovers in the game had been played were too extraordinary for a line to be drawn upon any head.

Simmons had thrashed Middlebrough by 5 to 0 at Middlebrough on that same Saturday. Cup-ties form with a vengeance! Newcastle were the only team that were not the most likely, and it was an open secret that they would go all out for the Cup as well.

The new find, Thomas Maw, was living in a private room at the residence of Gillingham's mother, and he came down to the ground every day and made himself useful, executing any odd jobs that Simmons the trainer, or the club secretary, Mr. Kelly, wanted done for them.

On the Wednesday afternoon the lads came down to the ground by order of the secretary, and the first to be seen was a pair of trousers, which some of them, notably, Gillingham, Ainsworth, and Freeman, were not to time.

"No," was the new lad, Thomas Maw, there, usually the most punctual of them all. He would have lived and slept on the ground if he had been asked to do so... He was marked to Frank the day before, so eager was Maw to be there, and so enthusiastically did he work.

"Then Simmons irritably, when the players had nearly all arrived—'now, then! Get out on the field, lads, and practise your game, and don't dawdle!'"

"Frank Butler caught his chum, Jack Galway, by the arm... 'What's up, he cried, 'just look at Ainsworth! He's a right scoundrel!'"

"I don't know what's the matter with me!" he groaned. "I've got something on my mind... My head's on fire. My body's like ice. My limbs ache so that I can scarcely breathe."

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