

even entered for a battalion event. That confounded poem-writing of his made no end of trouble for him, and his only way of getting level with his tormentors was by refusing to turn out in our teams."

"I saw him in the baths, sir," Ron remarked, "and it struck me then that he had the legs of a sprinter. Has he been training at all?"

"He goes out alone," said the sergeant-major. "That poetry of his makes him dotty, I'm afraid. But last year, when he was on furlough in September, we got newspaper cuttings proving that he romped home in two or three really hot handicaps. If the pig-headed fellow had only listened to reason we would have had a different reputation in Blacktown now."

This was good news for the brothers. They had now a decent candidate for the "220," a dark horse of promise for the "quarter," in the person of the despised poet, and Val could be depended upon to hold his end up in the "mile."

"Hang it! I believe we will put up a good fight, after all," Ron said. "If we can only find someone to go the half-mile in anything like decent time, we'll give the Blacktown Harriers a run for their money."

"That's what I hinted to Pritchard," Val said, with a smile, "and you ragged me about it, too, by the way!"

At two in the afternoon, the competitors paraded, and were marched off to the ground where the trials were to be held. This was a huge field, about a mile and a half from barracks, rented by Colonel Armytage for the purpose of grazing his horses, of which he had a fair stud, and was very proud.

Ron and Val were walking by the side of the party, when they swept past a tiny church with a very high belfry. A number of workmen were engaged about the place. Just as the rear file of soldiers passed the door, a low rumbling noise, followed by a tremendous crash, sounded. Looking round, they saw a dense volume of white dust pouring out of the porch, and a huge beam tilted out through the wall.

Quick as a flash, the two corporals leaped the low wall, and dashed along the wide path towards the porch. As they did so a lime-stained figure came scrambling out across the heaps of fallen bricks and fragments of wood.

"My child—my child!" he moaned, covering his eyes with his hands.

Ron caught him by the arm.

"What has happened?" he cried.

He saw by the cut of the coat and the white collar that the man was a clergyman.

"The inside of the tower has fallen," the hoarse voice gasped, "and my little darling had gone up to see the bell. God help her—God help her!"

It was evident to the lads that the unfortunate gentleman was incapable of coherent speech. Whatever had to be done had to be done quickly.

"Come along, Val!" Ron cried, sprinting for the porch. "There is no time to be lost."

Over the mournful heaps of shattered beams and broken bricks they clambered, and began to search feverishly among the ruins. Several of the workmen and soldiers joined them, tearing at the fallen beams, coughing and choking in the pungent clouds.

Presently the dust cleared away, and looking upwards, Ron saw something which brought a cry of joy to his lips.

"See, the top floor still holds, and the child is there yet."

High above their heads, through the jagged beams and twisted supports, they saw the solid floor, and peering down at them through the square opening up which the bell-rope passed, was a tiny white face!

But the whole of the rotten old staircase had fallen. The child seemed cut off from all earthly aid.

A groan of pity ran around the watchers. Then Ron leaped forward, and pointed.

"The rope—the rope!" he cried.

The huge cord swung slowly to and fro, some ten feet above his head. In a flash, Val saw what his brother meant, and scrambled over the debris to his side.

"It's over a hundred and fifty feet, old chap," he whispered; "but if anyone can climb it, you can."

Ron threw off his jacket, and, loosening his braces, tied them tightly round his waist. Then, kicking off his boots, he turned to Val.

"Give me a lift!"

The young instructor fell into position at once, left foot forward, leg bent, right foot braced behind, hands clasped in front and held low.

Ron placed his foot in his brother's hands, and touched his shoulders slightly.

"Now!" he cried.

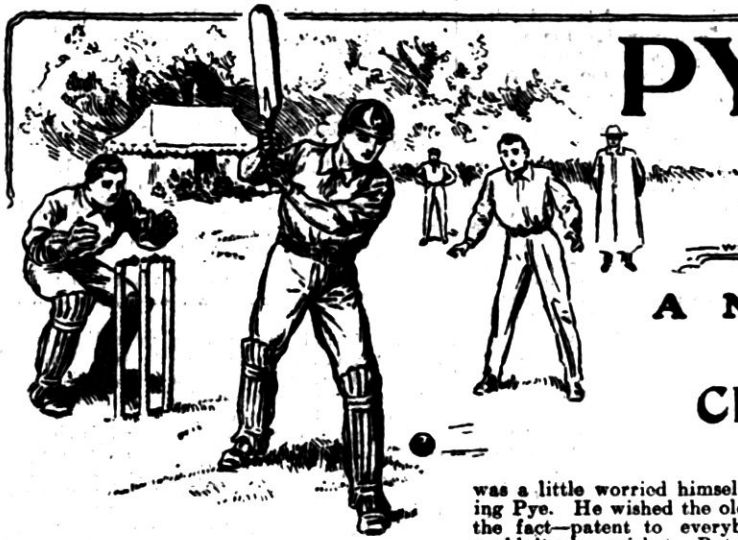
With a mighty effort, Val straightened up, raising his hands at the same time. Easily and gracefully Ron shot into the air, reaching out for the rope. He gripped, slipped an inch or two, then, as the watchers dashed forward to catch him, his great muscles tightened, and, arm-over-arm, he swung up the tossing rope.

A faint cry sounded from the doorway, and looking round they saw that it was the vicar, who was standing with head back, watching the lithe, sturdy figure as it went higher and higher into the ruin above.

His lips were moving, but no sound came from them. A strange hush descended on the rough workmen and soldiers gathered there.

A father was praying for his child's life. Would his prayer be heard and granted?

(Another powerful long instalment next week.)



PYE'S BIG MATCH.

A NOVEL CRICKET STORY.
BY POPULAR
CHARLES HAMILTON.

"I'm sorry," said Pendleton—and he really was sorry, though he was half laughing—"I'm sorry, but it's absolutely impossible, old chap!"

Pye couldn't see it.

But then, it was no use expecting Pye to see it. Pye was a sensible chap on all other points. He was the top of his Form in most things. In the class-room, in fact, he was unequalled by any other fellow in the Sixth Form at Mornington. He was the best German scholar in the school, and he would read big books, with every sign of enjoyment, that made other fellows' heads ache simply to look at them. But on the cricket-field Pye was a duffer.

Pye couldn't see it; but the fact was patent to everybody else at Mornington. What he knew about German irregular verbs would have filled books, and what he didn't know about cricket would have overflowed whole libraries. Pye's cricket was the joke of fags in the Remove, and had even been known to bring a smile to the grave and solemn countenance of the revered Head.

Under the circumstances, his ambition to play in the first eleven was, as several fellows said, rather too rich. Why the chap couldn't be satisfied with doing what he could do, and leaving alone what he couldn't do, was a puzzle to all Mornington. The mere thought of Pye at the wicket made the most serious fellows smile.

Yet Pye, who could talk German and Greek faster than Pendleton could talk English, and who could win scholarships "on his head," so to speak, was possessed with an unquenchable desire to shine as a cricketer. He fancied himself in flannels. He prided himself upon a certain "late cut" he had cultivated, and with which he had sometimes knocked the bails off his own wicket.

There was no arguing with Pye on the subject. Yet he was such a kind, obliging, good-natured fellow that his friends did not lose patience with him. There wasn't one who wouldn't have been pleased to gratify him, if it had been within the limits of the possible. But, as Pendleton put it, what was the use of bestowing a cap for the first eleven upon a chap who couldn't have kept his end up against a team of fags?

Just now Mornington First had a big match on—a big match for them! They were playing Underwood that week, and Underwood were a strong side, a side that were accustomed to look on the fixture with Mornington as a walk-over. Pendleton meant to beat Underwood this time, or break something, and he was selecting his eleven with awful care. In the midst of the worries of a worried cricket captain, came Pye's modest request that he should be played on Saturday.

Pendleton could not help laughing. But he was really sorry, as he said. Pye was his chum, and Pendleton hated to say no to a chum, especially to such a decent chap as Pye. But the thing was wildly impossible. Of course, it was just like old Pye to pick upon the most difficult match of the season to urge his claims with unusual earnestness.

"My dear chap," said the captain of Mornington kindly, "I'd do it like a shot if it could be done, you know that! But—well, not to put too fine a point on it—you can't play for toffee!"

"I've never had a real chance," said Pye. "Oh, come!" said Pendleton rather warmly. "Haven't I had you out at the nets time and again—haven't I given you every chance in practice matches? Come now!"

"That's different. I've got a feeling that I should show what I really can do in a really big match," said Pye.

Pendleton grinned.

"Well, I dare say you've got that feeling, Pye—we all have curious and inexplicable feelings at times; but I haven't got it, so you'll excuse me if I don't play you."

"Well, if you've made up your mind—"

said Pye rather huffily.

Pendleton clapped him kindly on the shoulder.

"Look here, old chap, you stick to Greek and German and mathematics and things. You weren't born to shine as a Fry or a Ranji. Take my word for it."

And the Mornington captain walked away, leaving Pye looking very gloomy. Pendleton

was a little worried himself. He hated refusing Pye. He wished the old chap would grasp the fact—patent to everybody else—that he couldn't play cricket. But that was about the last fact Pye seemed likely to grasp.

Pye stood looking after the stalwart form of the cricket captain for a few moments, and then he thrust his hands deep into his pockets and walked away. He went into his study, and jammed the door shut, and flung himself into his armchair. His face was very glum. From the armchair he had a view through his open window of the green fields, and he saw Pendleton and Herbert and Winwood and other members of the first eleven going down to practise.

The Underwood match was on the morrow, and the Mornington cricketers were putting in all their spare time at the nets now. Pye's glance dwelt enviously on the sunburnt fellows in flannels. Hang it all, why couldn't he get a chance at cricket?

The afternoon was warm and drowsy. Faintly from the Close came the merry click of bat and ball, and the cheery voices of the cricketers. Pye grunted in a dissatisfied way, and turned his glance upon a volume that lay on the book-rest on his chair. Then his face lighted up a little.

It was his favourite book—Goethe's "Faust," in the original German. He had left it there from the last reading—and in his dissatisfied frame of mind he turned to it again. After all, there was always consolation in reading a jolly good book, and he let his eyes fall upon the open page, and began to read.

The volume was open at the scene wherein Mephistopheles, in the guise of a gay "Junker," enters Faust's chamber, and the discontented philosopher is led to take the fatal step. Many a time had Pye read those wonderful lines, and he always re-read them with increasing pleasure.

"Ich moecht' bittere Thranen weinen," says the poor philosopher, "den Tag zu sehn, den

mir in seinen Lauf, nicht einen Wunsch erfüllen werd', nicht einen." ("I might weep bitter tears to see the day, which, in its course, will not fulfil a single wish of mine.") And wasn't that just how Pye himself felt?

Perhaps Pye did not feel quite so bad as that about it, but in his present mood he sympathised more than ever with his hero, and wasn't at all surprised at his accepting the tempting bait held out by the mocking demon. Pye thought of his own case, and what he would have said if Mephistopheles had suddenly walked into his study, and offered to make him a ripping cricketer, and get him his cap for the Underwood match on the same terms.

Pye smiled at the thought. Of course, anything of that sort was impossible. But if it had happened, and he was asked to strike the bargain, he knew that he would be strongly tempted to reply as Faust did, "Und Schlag auf Schlag." Yes, rather. But, of course, it was impossible; he would never get a chance like that!

Yet the thought ran strangely in his mind as he sat there at ease in the drowsy afternoon. He left off reading at the end of the scene, and, in spite of himself, he allowed his mind to dwell on it. Supposing there should be something in it, after all?

The Faust legend had been believed, in some form or another, from the earliest ages. That story of selling oneself to the tempter was one of the oldest. Of course, it wasn't true. And it would be wicked, anyway. Yet, if one could get terms, and dodge Mephisto at the finish, as Faust did—Pye smiled at the idea, and yet he could not dismiss it from his mind.

He yawned at last.

"By Jove, I believe I'm going to sleep! I think I'll go out and have a look at the fellows playing, if I can't play myself—I—think—I—"

He yawned again. Then he gave a start. Someone was tapping at his door. In the drowsy silence of the summer afternoon the tap

(Continued on the next page.)

Pye started, shuddered, and opened his eyes. Pendleton was standing over him, a look of blank amazement in his eyes.



sounded with strange almost ominous distinctness. Pye felt too lazy to rise, or even move; he just called out, "Come in!" without turning his head.

Tap!
Instead of the door opening, there came another tap. Pye, a little impatient, called out, "Come in!" a second time, in a louder tone.

Tap!
Pye couldn't help smiling. Why, this was just the same as in "Faust." The fiend could not enter the dwelling-place without being three times invited—that was part and parcel of the old legend. The chap who was knocking at his door seemed to be as fussy on this point as Mephistopheles. And Pye, smiling at the odd thought, called out a third time, "Come in!"

Then the door opened.
Footsteps came over towards him, and a sound as of a cloak rustling. Pye did not turn his head even then.

"Hallo," he murmured, "is that you, Pendleton? You've come just in time to save me from dropping off! It's sleepy in here."

There was no reply, and the silence was so strangely eerie that Pye started, and looked up. Then all his drowsiness left him of a sudden. It was not Pendleton!

A tall, handsome—handsome in a sinister way—strangely-attired individual stood before him.

Pye did not need telling whom it was. The tall, elegant form, the scarlet cloak, the cock's feather in the hat, revealed at a glance whom his visitor was. Yet it was all so wildly impossible that Pye half believed that he was dreaming. Mephistopheles in Faust's dim old chamber was one thing, but in a Sixth Form study in Mornington School quite another.

Was it one of the fellows having a lark with him.
"Hallo!" said Pye.
"You were thinking of me," said the visitor, with an agreeable smile. "You wished me to come."

"Did I?" said Pye vaguely. "Who are you?"
"You know well enough."

Pye rubbed his eyes.
"Oh, draw it mild!" he exclaimed. "You don't mean to tell me that you're—you're Mephistopheles, you know!"

"But you know I am."
Pye looked at him again.

"Well, I suppose you are," he said. "It seems—queer! You know, I never believed in you."

Mephistopheles laughed.
"That's nothing new," he remarked. "May I take a seat? Thanks." He drew a chair up opposite Pye, and sat down, laying his rapier carefully across his knees. "I want a little talk with you. I never appear to those who are not ready for me. You're ready."

"Am I?" said Pye.
"You are! You are willing to go to great lengths to gain your ambition—you have even allowed dislike and suspicion to enter your heart against your old friends because they don't gratify you."

Pye turned red.
Perhaps there had been some smouldering, half-formed feeling of this sort deep down in his heart, hardly known even to himself. It was horrible to have it dragged out brutally into words like this.

"Oh, hold on!" he exclaimed. "I know the fellows don't do me justice, but—"
Mephistopheles waved his hand.

"Never mind that. You want to realise your ambition?"
"How do you know anything about it?"

"I know all! Allwissend bin ich nicht, doch viel ist mir bewusst," said Mephistopheles, in the very words Pye had been reading only half an hour before.

Pye could only stare.
"Now, I can do everything for you that you wish," said Mephistopheles persuasively. "I ask nothing—practically nothing—in return. You want to become a great cricketer?"

"Yes," said Pye involuntarily. "I'd give anything—"
He paused abruptly, as the dreadful thought crossed his mind of what the visitor might demand.

Mephistopheles nodded agreeably.
"Exactly! You'd give anything! Good! Suppose I made you a great cricketer, and gave you your chance in the match to-morrow?"

"My word!" said Pye. "That would be ripping! To make the chaps admit that they

had never done me justice, and to make 'em all open their eyes, and win for the school, too! You see, it's a bit of a hassle to-morrow—Underwood have always been too strong for us. But, of course, you know that, as you know everything."

"Of course! How do you like the idea?"
"First-rate."

"You have only to say the word."
"Ye-es!" said Pye cautiously. He wondered for a moment whether all this was real.

Here he was, talking to Mephistopheles, whose existence he had never believed in, and not feeling in the least degree astonished! That was the curious part; he ought to have felt astonished at the whole affair! But it seemed like a matter of course. "But what's the word?" he went on warmly. "I'm not going to strike any bargain with you, you know! I'm not going to sell—"

He broke off as his visitor smiled.
"Nonsense! That is a foolish old notion," said Mephistopheles. "All I need is to place a slight mark on your arm—just a pin-prick, so to speak—so that you will be numbered among my clients. That is all! I claim nothing else."

"Well, that isn't much," said Pye.
"Of course not! It is less than nothing. If you agree—"

"I don't see why I shouldn't," said Pye thoughtfully.
"Then give me your hand."

Pye hesitated a moment, and then gave his hand. There was a sudden biting pain on his wrist. He gave a sharp cry.

"Hold on! I won't—I won't! I tell you I won't! It's all off! Do you hear? It's all off!"

But there was no reply. He thought he heard the echo of a mocking chuckle—and that was all! He stared blankly at the chair where Mephistopheles was sitting. It was empty! Where had he gone?

Pye, dazed and bewildered, started to his feet. The door was closed—the study was empty! He sniffed and sniffed. He could

"Oh, is that it?" Pendleton sniffed. "What on earth have you been burning here?"
Pye jumped.

"What do you mean?"
"There's a nice little sulphur! Been burning any matches?"

Pye trembled. Was it true, after all, then?
"No," he said.

"Hum!" Pendleton sniffed again. "It's gone now. Never mind. I say, I've got something rather important to say to you. I hope you're feeling fit?"

"Fit as a fiddle!" said Pye wonderingly.
"What is it?"

"I've been thinking over what you said to me. You've never had a real chance in a big match."

"Yes," said Pye, with a trembling eagerness. "You don't mean to say that—that—"

"Yes, I do. We want you to-morrow."
"To play Underwood?"

"To play Underwood!"
Pye drew a deep breath. Was this chance—

coincidence—or was that strange vision a true one? Was this the work of—Impossible! But he thought he would sound Pendleton on the subject. Nothing like making sure!

"Look here, Pen!" he said abruptly. "What made you come to this decision? I want to know! It's very sudden."

"I've been talking it over with the chaps," said Pendleton. "They're all willing for you to play, and young Greene is standing out to make room for you. You remember you said you had a feeling you could win? Well, we've all got the same feeling, that's all. We're going to play you."

"I see," said Pye slowly.
"I suppose you're willing to play?" said the Mornington skipper, laughing.

"Oh, yes, rather! But—"
Pye hesitated. "I say, Pen, have you seen a rather strange-looking chap hanging about the corridors—I think he's been in here—a fellow dressed in old-fashioned togs, with a red cloak—"

"Eh?"

after what had gone before; but there was the plain fact, and he was not disposed to quarrel with it.

The next morning Pendleton clapped him on the shoulder cheerily, and asked him how he felt, and Pye answered that he was as right as rain.

"Good!" said Winwood. "We rely on you, Pye."
Strange enough to Pye was it to be addressed in that manner on the eve of an important cricket match; but it was very pleasant.

But the rest of Mornington received the news that Pye was to play against Underwood with incredulity, and when incredulity was no longer possible, with disgust and amazement. What was Pendleton thinking of? Did he intend to deliberately let down the side before the enemy? These questions were debated in Pye's hearing, and he listened with burning cheeks! But let them wait a bit, that was all! They would jolly soon see that he was worthy of being played in Mornington First!

And when the stumps were pitched, and Underwood arrived, Pye went down with the rest, looking very fit in spotless flannels. But grins and open jeers from his schoolfellows greeted his appearance outside the pavilion. Nobody seemed to expect a victory. The only question was, how many runs would Underwood win by, or would they win by a whole innings with runs to spare?

The Underwood fellows, as usual, swaggered on. They knew they had a "soft thing" in the Mornington match, and they did not disguise their opinion. Pendleton had done his best to get up a winning team, and Mornington looked more dangerous than on previous occasions. But the Underwoods weren't impressed. Their skipper tossed with Pendleton with an air of carelessness, which showed that he attached no importance to winning or losing the toss. The Mornington crowd noted it, as they had often noted it before, and they would have given weeks' and weeks' of pocket-money to see Underwood soundly drubbed for once.

But there wasn't much chance of that, they told themselves and each other grumpily. Pendleton's side had had a chance, but Pen had deliberately thrown it away by including the rankest duffer at Mornington in the eleven. What could be expected of a side that played Pye?

And the Mornington fellows growled and scowled and prepared for the worst.

The home side won the toss, and then there were mocking cries of advice to Pendleton: "Put in Pye!" "Open with Pye!"

The cries were sheer mockery, and nobody expected Pendleton to do it, but he did. Pye's name was at the top of the list, and Pye opened the innings with Herbert.

The amazement of the crowd when they saw Pye come out of the pavilion with his bat under his arm knew no bounds. It was with difficulty that they restrained a yell of protest. Pye was certain to make an exhibition of himself, and a duck's egg to start the innings with might have a hopelessly demoralising effect upon the side. But Pendleton's word as cricket captain was law. He was well-known as a fellow who would have his own way. And the crowd waited hopefully for Pye's wicket to fall to the first ball of the first over.

But it didn't.
Pye blocked the first ball, and there was a murmur of surprise on all sides.

"Not out, by jingo!"
"Pye's stopped the ball!"
"Marvelous!"

"Who said the age of miracles was past?"
And there was a laugh.

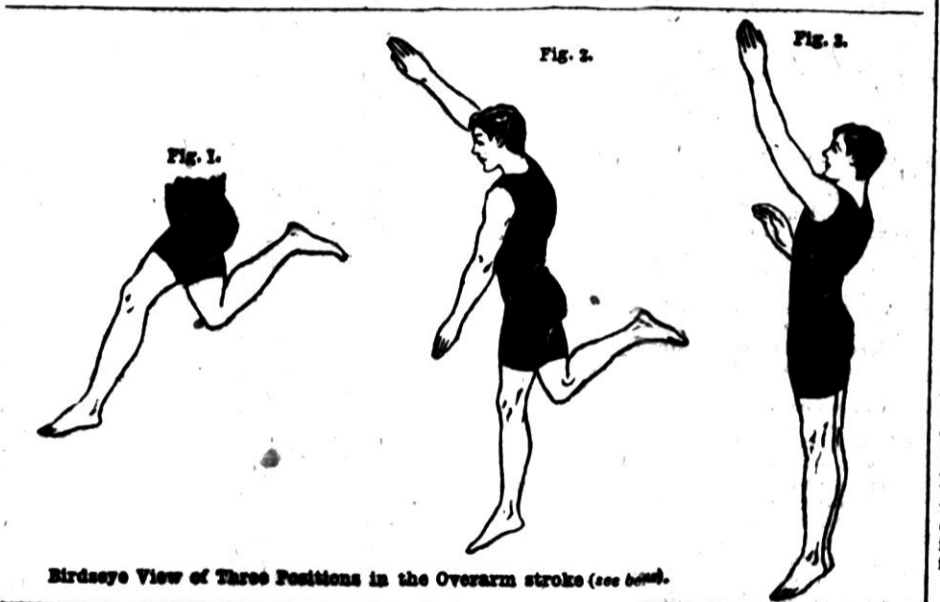
Pye's cheeks burned red. He would show them yet that he wasn't to be despised as a batsman! Let 'em wait!

They hadn't long to wait!
The next ball down was a scorcher, and, according to all the laws of probabilities, it ought to have knocked Pye's wicket sky-high while he was fumbling around with the bat.

Instead of which, Pye swiped it away with a mighty stroke, and the eye failed to follow its flight; and the Underwood fieldsmen stared, and trotted after it, and murmured to themselves that they hadn't dreamed that Mornington had such a Jossop in its ranks.

"Run—run!" yelled the crowd, but Pye didn't run. And they saw the reason the next moment. It was a boundary, and Pye knew it.

(Continued on the next page.)



have sworn there was a smell of sulphur in the room!

Nonsense! He had been asleep and dreamed it all—that was the explanation. Then he looked at his wrist. A chill ran through all his limbs. There, plain to see on the white skin, was a tiny red mark! Only a tiny mark—but there it was! It might have been made by knocking his wrist on a nail—he might have moved in his sleep. It was—it must be—all a dream! Mephistopheles in the twentieth century, in a Sixth Form study at Mornington! Absurd!

It was with relief that Pye saw his study door open. Pendleton came in, ruddy and cheery, from the cricket-field, his bat under his arm. He looked at Pye, and his expression changed a little.

"Hallo, old chap! What's the matter?"
"Matter?" stammered Pye.

"Yes. You're looking very queer and white."
"I've been asleep," muttered Pye. "Had a rotten dream."

"And a cock's father in his hat, and wearing a sword?"
Pendleton stared at him.

"Are you joking, Pye?"
"No!" stammered Pye. "I—I only—"

"You've been dreaming," said Pendleton. "Ah, I see what it is. You fell asleep reading 'Faust,' and you've dreamed that you've seen Mephistopheles. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Pye.
But that way he understood it clearly enough. What Pendleton thought was clearly the truth. It was a dream; nothing more.

Pye brightened up wonderfully as that assurance came to him, and he fell to discussing the cricket prospects with the Mornington skipper, and dismissed all thoughts of that unpleasant vision from his mind. What an ass he had been to think for a single moment that it could have been real!

Pendleton had said only the truth when he said that the whole team were eager for Pye to play. Pye could hardly understand it,

SWIMMING.

By Mr. WILLIAM HENRY, Secretary of the Royal Life-Saving Society.

The Overarm stroke (continued).

It will be observed that when the top hand and arm are being returned for the next stroke the under arm and hand is performing the positive stroke, or when one arm is pulling the other is being recovered for the next stroke.

In practising the above stroke the learner should take particular care to lie upon his side, and in this way to prepare for the leg stroke, which, in the case of the correct overarm stroke, is entirely different to the ordinary breast stroke.

In the breast stroke the legs are kicked outwards wide apart, right and left; whilst in the overarm stroke the legs are moved as in walking or taking a long stroke or step—that is to say, one leg is kicked towards the front, and

the other backwards, both being brought together in line with the body.

In giving particulars of the action of the arms for the overarm stroke, I stated that the arms act independently, and that the upper arm should be bent at the elbow. It should also be remembered that the stroke should not be made too long, either at the beginning or at the finish, and that the power of the arm stroke is greatest when the hands are passing the face and chest. The stroke with the hands should be finished with a flick or jerk.

When the upper hand is passing the face and chest, the legs should be opened for the leg stroke, and should be wide apart, ready for the closing kick at the moment when the hand is about to be lifted out of the water opposite to the waist.

A careful observer of the baths will note that the above description does not agree with the action of the majority of swimmers. Most side-stroke swimmers pull the upper arm at the moment when the legs are closing, but those who made

the first times, and have won most of the English Championships, adopt the method I have described, as the movement is greatly in averting the dead point, which is very noticeable when the overarm is pulled together with the closure of the legs.

The learner will observe that the action of the legs in the overarm stroke is entirely different to that used in the breast stroke. In the former, the top leg is brought forward and the under leg backward, somewhat similar to taking a long forward stride; but in the breast stroke the legs are kicked wide apart to the right and left.

To perform the kick for the overarm stroke properly much practice is necessary, and

the best way of learning this kick is to turn on the side, and

take hold of the rail which is fixed round most baths with the upper hand, and place the lower hand on the wall of the bath about eighteen inches below the upper one, and bring the body and legs to the surface in a straight line. Now open the legs wide apart, by pushing the upper leg forward, keeping it straight, and the lower leg bent at the knee, and brought backward in the position of Fig. 1.

The next movement is to close the legs with as much force as possible, by bringing the upper leg back in line with the body, and at the same moment straightening the lower one with force, and continue the action until the feet cross each other about six inches. The effective part of this stroke comes from the whole of the calf and step of the upper leg and the front of the lower leg as they are being closed with a swirl, thus sending the body forward.

(To be continued next week.)

"My word, what a ghastly fluke!" said somebody.

Pye grinned. He could afford to grin now, for he felt within him the stuff of which Jessops and Haywards are made. It was a surprise to himself, but there it was. He knew that this innings of his was going to be a wonderful one.

And wonderful it was! The crowd had to admit that. They stared, they gasped, they wondered; but they had to admit it.

For Pye cut away that over for 15, and the odd run gave him the bowling again at the other end, and then the fellows watched him, breathless.

The Underwoods looked astounded! Where had Mornington picked up this miracle? Why hadn't they heard of him before? Why, such a fellow ought to have been playing for his county!

Unless it was all a fluke, that wonderful over! But it wasn't, as the next over showed. Fourteen runs to Pye; that was the total of the second over! Wonders would never cease.

And that was only the beginning!

Herbert's wicket fell, and Pendleton came in, and his wicket, too, went down at last to the Underwood bowling. But Pye's stood fast. The runs were piling up at an amazing rate! The Underwood fieldsmen groaned when Pye had the bowling. He sent them leather-hunting in a way that they did not love. He never gave them the chance of a catch. The best throw-in found his bat on the crease. He was wonderful! He swiped and swiped, with threes and fours, and never a chance did he give the fieldsmen.

The Mornington crowd were cheering now.

Their amazement continued as great as ever, but they were delighted, and they began to watch Pye, and to note every stroke, and they cheered every time his bat clicked on the ball, and sent it on its journey.

The score ran up marvellously. Five wickets were down for 200 runs when Pendleton mercifully declared. And of the 200, 107 were due to Pye. He easily passed the century, and he was not out when the innings was declared closed. From first to last, Underwood hadn't had a chance against him.

They crowded round him, they shook his hands and clapped him on the back as he came off the field. Never had there been such an outburst of hero-worship on the Mornington ground.

And when the Underwood innings opened, and Pendleton put Pye on to bowl the first over, there was no dissentient voice.

The Underwood batsman looked at him uneasily. The ball came down like a bullet, and the batsman didn't even see it. Before he knew what was happening, his middle stump was out of the ground.

"How's that?" roared all Mornington.

And the umpire grinned, and briefly responded:

"Out!"
Next man in was awfully careful. His care availed him little. His off stump reclined at an angle of forty-five when Pye had bowled, and he carried out his unused bat to a chorus of cheers from the crowd.

"Bravo! Well bowled!"

The third man fared the same, and then there was a roar.

"The hat trick! Hurrah!"

Pye—Pye, the champion duffer, has done the hat trick! It was incredible, but true! There was the wrecked wicket. There was the hapless batsman walking away towards the pavilion!

They eagerly watched the fourth ball of that amazing over. There was a click, and the balls were on the ground! Then the next ball, the same result! The sixth and last ball came down, and the sixth batsman was caught unaware! Out!

They were too astounded to cheer for a full minute!

It was the double hat trick from Pye—Pye! Underwood looked depressed, and no wonder! Never, in all their experience, had their wickets been wiped up like this. Six down for nought! It was awful, unexampled! And the terrible bowler was as fresh as paint!

Pendleton, grinning, took the next over himself, and Pye was put on to field. The school were prepared for anything now, and when Pye caught the next batsman out, in the slips, with a very difficult catch, they ceased to be astonished. They cheered, though, with a tremendous cheering.

And the next wicket fell to a throw-in from the long field, and, of course, it was Pye who threw in the ball! Eight down for nought! No wonder the Underwood batsmen shook in their shoes as they went to the wicket. It really wasn't much good going there, their stay was so short.

They lived through an over, and then the bowling came to Pye again. They knew what to expect, and they received it.

Two wickets down to two successive balls, and the innings was ended! Underwood had taken a total of 3 runs!

The crowd were laughing and cheering. Underwood, of course, had to follow on, though they might as well have thrown up the sponge at once.

The second innings was not quite so ruinous as the first. Pendleton, in mercy, kept Pye idle in some of the overs. But his fielding was almost as dangerous as his bowling. The agony of the Underwood fellows was short-lived. In half an hour more they were all down for 20!

Mornington had won the great match—won it hands down, by an innings and 177 runs! It was incredible, but it was true! Needless

to say, Pye was the hero of the hour, the never-sufficiently-to-be-glorified-hero, and he was carried shoulder-high off the field, and round the Close, amid hat-waving and cheering such as the old school had seldom witnessed.

Pye's brain was in a whirl, but he was happy—happy as sunshine. Breathless, delighted, he was set down at last, and allowed to escape to his own quarters. He sank breathlessly into the armchair in his study, the cheering from below still ringing in his ears. What a glorious day it had been—what a triumph! It seemed like a miracle to him. How had he done it?

"I hope you have not forgotten me."
The voice sounded softly, suddenly, through the study. Pye started, and a shiver ran through him. He knew that voice.

He stared up at the tall figure in the red cloak, with the cock's feather in its hat, helplessly.

"What do you want here?" he asked, with an attempt at bravado, which was betrayed by the weak quaver in his voice.

Mephistopheles laughed.

"Didn't you expect me?"

"No, I didn't," said Pye hotly, "and I don't want anything to say to you! I'm not going to have you coming into my room like this, and I don't like that beastly smell of sulphur you have about you. Get out of my study!"

"I am going, and you are coming with me."

"I—I won't—I won't!"

But Pye felt a sickening feeling that he would, all the same. He was in the grip of this—this demon, and there was no escape from his bargain. Yet he resisted.

"I won't come! Get out! I won't!"

Mephistopheles smiled.

"Hither," he said—"hither to me!"

And an irresistible force seemed to tear Pye from the chair, and drag him towards that mocking figure. He struggled—he clutched the chair, he fought. His senses reeled, and a dimness came over him—a grasp fastened upon his shoulder, and he cried aloud, and struck out.

"What on earth's the matter, old chap? Wake up!"

It was Pendleton's voice.

Pye started and shuddered and opened his eyes. The sunset was gleaming in at the open windows of the study. Pendleton was standing before him, blank amazement in his face, and save for himself and the captain of Mornington, the room was empty.

Pye gasped with relief.

"He's—he's gone, then?"

Pendleton stared at him.

"Gone! Who?"

"Mephistopheles."

Pendleton looked concerned.

"I say, old chap, you've been dreaming. It's a nightmare of a sort, I suppose. You've been reading this old thing, and dreaming about it."

"Yes, that's what you said before, but—"

"Said before? What do you mean?"

"Yesterday, when you noticed the smell of sulphur in the room."

"What on earth's the matter with you, Pye?"

Pye laughed constrainedly.

"Why, of course, that was part of the dream," he said. "It was all rot. Mephistopheles never came, and there's no mark on my wrist, is there?"

"Of course there isn't!"

"No, of course. Yet—yet it was wonderful my winning the match like that, wasn't it? Almost enough to make a fellow believe—"

Pendleton looked at him very attentively.

"What match are you talking about, Pye?"

"Why, the Underwood match."

"To-morrow's match?"

"To-morrow's!" yelled Pye. "What are you talking about? Didn't you play me against Underwood, and didn't I lick 'em? Great Scott!" he broke off, as he saw Pendleton's face. "Was it all a dream? My hat! Is it still Friday afternoon?"

"Of course it is!"

Pye rubbed his eyes.

Yes, of course, it was all a dream. He had fallen asleep over "Faust" that Friday afternoon, and had slumbered undisturbed—save by a wild dream—till the Mornington captain came in from cricket practice, and awoke him.

He understood it all now, and he laughed. It was a tremendous relief, and it had been a strange—a very strange dream!

"Feel all right now?" asked Pendleton, rather anxiously. "You shouldn't go to sleep with your head hanging down over the arm of your chair. It's bound to make you dream."

Pye laughed.

"Yes, I suppose so! I've had an awfully queer dream. I'll tell you about it presently; but just now I've got something else to say. I know I can't play cricket, Pen, and I'm going to give up the idea, and take to something I can do."

"Well, I don't know what your dream was," said Pendleton, grinning; "but if it has cured you of wanting to play in Mornington First, it's done you good. Come on; we're going to have a little feed in my study, and we want you."

And Pye went. He was so relieved to find that it was a dream, after all, that it seemed a very little thing to part with his ambition of shining as a cricketer in the first eleven. And the next day Pye, without a trace of envy in his heart, watched the great match, and cheered as loudly and heartily as anybody when Mornington just scraped a victory with a single run to spare, after a hard game to the finish.

(More splendid, complete yarns next week.)



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.

Bowling (continued).

As time goes on, you will find it necessary to deceive the batsman in pace as well as pitch. I do not mean that one ball should be slow, and the next very fast. Such tactics would never deceive anybody but the merest novice. The only way to deceive in pace is to deliver the ball with the same action as usual, merely imparting a little extra strength as it leaves the fingers. Ever such a slight variation will have the desired effect.

A dodge which is frequently made use of when bowling against a dogged batsman is to keep him playing forward at good length balls, and then send one down with precisely the same delivery, but just a trifle slower and an inch or two shorter. In all likelihood he will play his stroke without seeing the difference, and will consequently spoon the ball gently back into the bowler's hands.

Bowling Breaks.

I know you are all eager to know something about "break," but I wonder how many young players know that it is almost impossible to bowl a ball without getting a little break on, and that this small amount can be easily added to with constant practice. If you hold the ball with the tips of the fingers and bowl right-handed, the ball naturally spins slightly from the off to the leg. In the same way, the left-handed bowler naturally imparts break from the leg to the off.

Now, if you study this fact very carefully, and try to improve upon what nature already has done for you, there is not the slightest

reason why you should not be able to break almost as much as you like; but care will have to be taken, so that length is not sacrificed. Half an hour's practice every day throughout the season will work wonders; but always remember that the ball which breaks two or three inches serves a better purpose than the one which breaks two or three feet. The former will deceive, whilst the latter is so obvious that the batsman will be on his guard, and will very soon get your measure, and knock you off.

I am afraid in Saturday afternoon cricket there is very little time to try any experiments. Nevertheless, I cannot help telling my young readers that in first-class cricket, hitting the stumps is not the only way in which a bowler tries to dismiss a batsman. You may have a man opposed to you who becomes well set, and, although he is unable to get runs off your good length balls, at the same time, you are unable to get him out.

Dismissing the Batsman.

This is the time when brain counts for a lot, and you must attempt to deceive him by every fair trick you have at your command. If you don't come off, remember that there are ten others in the field who are as anxious as you to bring about the batsman's downfall. You may have noticed that his particular weakness is a fondness for a hit in the direction of long-off. Then put an extra man out there, and let the batsman "have a go." Or he may be one of those people who cannot leave an "off ball" alone. In this case, put two more men in the slips, and bowl down a few balls well outside the off stump. He may score two or three 4's off you; but, sooner or later, he is bound to fall into the trap of his own making.

I would, however, strongly advise the young bowler to consult with his captain before acting as I have suggested in case his efforts may not be appreciated, and he should not be put on in the next match, simply because the batsman scored rather freely off the deliveries which were specially served up for him to hit.

J.B. Hobbs

(To be continued next week.)

THE CLOSE SEASON.

Notes Concerning Interesting Events in the Football World.

The Spurs.

THE Spurs have transferred, for a substantial sum, J. Walton (outside-right) to Sheffield United. This well-known player received the sum of £250 from a benefit match last season. Two new players have been signed on by the Tottenham club, both of which have previously been identified with junior football in Scotland. Their names and positions are, Harris, back, and Brown, centre-forward.

The annual shareholders' meeting of the Spurs took place on June 14th.

Swindon.

Last season the Swindon club's gates were a record for a Southern League club, the average takings being £144. The commencement of the season found them with the sum of £977 in hand, and its close arrived with that amount, reduced to £835.

The following are a few items from the balance-sheet:

Gates (first team), £2,879 2s. 5d.; Reserves, £376 12s. The total receipts were £5,342, including a balance of £977 at the bank last year and a £400 transfer fee. Concerning expenditure, £2,935 was paid out in wages and £264 was spent on the ground and general improvements; £267 went in travelling expenses.

The directors are endeavouring to obtain the sanction of the Football Association to their proposal to present each of last season's first team with a gold medal in commemoration of the club having gained the proud position of runners-up.

Notts Forest.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Harry Hallam, the much-respected secretary of the Notts Forest Club. Mr. Hallam succumbed to a severe attack of pneumonia, and died after a very brief illness. His age was forty. By his decease football loses one of its best-known and most highly-revered officials. He was a member of the Council of the Notts Football Association, of the Management Committee of the Midland Counties League, and of the Referees' Association.

Notts County.

The annual meeting of the Notts County Football Club was held a week or so back. The balance-sheet showed that the loss on the season was £416. The income from season tickets was £559, and gate money realised £4,357, of which £282 was paid to other clubs. The sum of £450 was received in transfer fees. The expenditure was £5,714, the principal items being £3,736 for players' and trainers' wages, £427 for travelling and hotel expenses, £172 for training expenses, and £191 for management.

Our Football League.

Already we have received quite a number of inquiries concerning our football competition for the coming season. Some of our friends want to know if we are going to run a football league next year, and others are asking for full particulars concerning it.

Let us at once say, therefore, that THE BOYS' REALM Football League has come to stay, and that we shall gladly welcome entries for the coming season. We are unable to give full particulars yet awhile, but it is safe to say that it will be very much on the lines of last year's competition. All bona fide clubs up to the age of twenty-one will be eligible.

In making application, a letter should be enclosed from the president of the club, vouching for the respectability and bona fides of the club. All clubs competing must have been established at least one season, exclusive of 1909-10.

Our Football Guide.

This handy little book of reference will make its appearance for the second time early in August. At the special desire of numerous friends the price will this year be one penny only. As before, it will contain practical advice on the great national winter pastime by experts, a list of all the principal fixtures for the season, and a comprehensive guide to football leagues throughout the country. All clubs belonging to football leagues should get their secretaries to send in full particular of the competition at an early date, so that they may be included in "THE BOYS' REALM Football Guide."

(Another interesting football article next week.)