

THE FUNNIEST SCHOOL TALE EVER WRITTEN. (See inside.)

The Boys' Realm 19

of SPORT & ADVENTURE.



BOWLED OUT!

A TALE of
COUNTY CRICKET
&
NELSON LEE, DETECTIVE



REDFERN MINOR.

A Rattling Instalment of Charles Hamilton's
Fascinating New School Tale.

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ARE:

SIDNEY REDFERN, a bright, fun-loving lad who is a new pupil at St. Dorothy's School. Sidney has an elder brother at St. Dorothy's.
ARTHUR REDFERN, who is a prefect in the Sixth Form. Arthur Redfern is inclined to be easily led, and is under the by-no-means-good influence of
RANSOME, another Sixth-Former, a slacker and a good-for-nothing.
SKELTON and **BROWN**, two Fourth-Formers, and leaders of the Classical side at St. Dorothy's.
TAFFY MORGAN, **VERNON**, and **RAKE**, the leaders of the Modern side at St. Dorothy's, deadly rivals of Skelton and Brown.
At St. Dorothy's there is a deadly and everlasting feud existing between the Classical and Modern sides. At the time of the arrival of Sidney Redfern, the captain of the Fourth Form, who has always been elected from the Classical side, has just left, and affairs are in a complicated state. There are exactly as many Classics in the Fourth as there are Moderns, and the result of the election for a new captain is bound to be a tie. Now Sidney Redfern has arrived, however, his vote will turn the scale one way or the other.

After much persuasion from both sides, Sidney votes for the Classics, to the rage and humiliation of the Moderns.
Taffy Morgan picks a quarrel with Sidney Redfern, and they decide to fight it out with gloves behind the school chapel. Taffy, who is very sanguine, meets with a great surprise when Sidney sends him to grass with a heavy blow.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

A Fight to a Finish.

BRAVO, Redfern!" The shout burst from all the Classical juniors in the crowd behind the chapel. The fall of the great Taffy amazed them, and it delighted them as much as it amazed them. Up to that moment no Classical junior had ever been able to stand up to the Modern leader. And so the Classics rejoiced, and the Modern juniors looked at one another very dubiously.

Everybody had expected to see Redfern wiped off the earth, so to speak, in the first round. And the first round had ended with Taffy on his back on the grass, looking up at the blue sky, and seeing more stars there than any astronomer ever saw with the most powerful glass.

Rake helped his chum to his feet. Taffy was looking a little dazed, and very much surprised. His look made the Classical juniors chuckle again. It was evident that he was experiencing an astonishment he would not soon recover from.

"It was a fluke, of course, Rake," he remarked.

"Of course!" said Rake. "Let me sponge your chivvy!"

"I wasn't exactly looking for that, you know."

"Of course not. Take a rest on my knee!"

"Oh, I don't want a rest! I shall squash him in the second round, now that I know what to expect!"

"Ye-es, of course you will!" said Rake loyally.

But, loyal as he was, he glanced at the opposite corner of the ring with some misgiving. Redfern did not seem to have turned a hair during that exciting round. Skelton had made a knee for him, and Redfern did not disdain to sit down. Brown was fanning him with his hat.

"Blessed if I expected anything like this!" grinned Skelton. "There's more in this chap than meets the eye. I suppose you'll be licked, Reddy, but you'll give Taffy a bit of a tussle first, and that's one comfort."

"Yes, that's a comfort, isn't it?" said Redfern cheerfully.

"Might pull out ahead if you're careful, though," said Skelton. "You never can tell! If Taffy loses his temper you'll have a chance. Don't let him get too close; he hits like a steam-hammer. I know; I've been there!"

And Skelton rubbed his nose, as if a painful recollection had just come into his mind. Vernon was looking at his watch.

"Time!"

The adversaries stepped up to the line again. Skelton whispered to Phipps to fetch a basin of water and a sponge, and Phipps cut off. It was pretty plain by this time that the fight was not to be, at all events, a walk-over. It was more likely to be the most obstinate contest that the Fourth Form at St. Dorothy's had ever seen.

Taffy was more cautious now. His lesson had not been lost of him. But his head was still singing a little, while Redfern was as fresh as paint.

The crowd looked on eagerly. If Redfern lived through this round, they were prepared to believe that he had a chance. For some time the opponents sparred with so much caution that neither was touched, but suddenly the fighting became close. Taffy got in a body blow that made Redfern stagger, and followed it up with a rap on the nose that dropped the new boy on the grass in a sitting posture.

Redfern blinked; in spite of the glove, the blow had told heavily, and the water rushed to his eyes. Vernon began to count:

"One, two, three, four, five—"

If Redfern did not rise before ten he was "done."

"Six, seven—"

Redfern sprang up, and Taffy knocked him down again immediately, with a grin on his face. But he seemed like a Jack-in-the-box; he was up again in a second, and holding his own, keeping Taffy's attack off by sheer skill of guard, till the welcome call of time gave him a much-needed relief.

"Time!" rapped out Vernon.

Redfern was gasping a little as he sank upon Skelton's knee. Brown III. fanned him, and sponged the perspiration from his face. The contact of the cool sponge freshened the junior wonderfully.

"How do you feel?" asked Skelton anxiously.

"All right!" said Redfern.

"Bellows to mend—eh?"

"I shall be all right!"

"Well, you've got pluck, and no mistake! My hat! If you lick Taffy we'll—we'll celebrate it somehow! Wire in—do your best!"

"You can jolly well depend on that!" grinned Redfern. "I sha'n't be licked if I can help it. What?"

"Time, chappies!"

The third round began. The smile of superiority had returned to Taffy's face, but it did not remain there long. A hard glove crashing upon the nose was sufficient to banish any smile. Redfern's right got home with terrific force; Taffy hardly knew how. The Modern leader staggered, but recovered himself, and guarded his face well for the rest of the round, without trying to attack. His head was swimming, and he could do no more. The call of time was as welcome to him then as it had previously been to Redfern.

The fourth round was the hardest of all so far. Both the juniors received punishment, hard and fast, but they stood it well; and Classics and Moderns looked on with bated breath. But for the gloves, the juniors would have been battered and bruised, and even with the gloves they began to show very visible signs of the punishment they were giving and taking.

Taffy's left eye was closing, and Redfern's nose was emitting a thin stream of red. But there was nothing "soft" about either of them. They could bear pain, and they never thought of finching.

When time was called they parted, and it was difficult to say which had had the better of the struggle. But the Moderns were growing anxious. They had expected Taffy to simply walk over the "new kid," and he had not done it.

Rake and Vernon looked anxious and worried. It would never do for the Classics to win; but there was no doubt that Taffy was getting "groggy."

"Buck up, old chap!" said Rake, as he bathed his chief's heated brow. "Put your beef into it, you know!"

Taffy glared at him.

"If you know more about fighting than I do, Rake, you'd better take him on yourself!" he grunted.

"Oh, I don't mean that, Taffy! Only remember what there is at stake. The Classics will crow over us no end if he licks you."

"Do you think he's going to lick me, you ass?"

"Well, just put your beef into it, that's all!"

"If you're looking for a thick ear, Rake—"

"Time!"

Taffy jerked himself into the ring again. Rake's evident doubts annoyed him, and he meant to show the doubting Thomas, in that round, how unfounded his doubts were. It was rather unfortunate, for it led Taffy to attack recklessly, and force the fighting; and Redfern was not an opponent with whom any chances could be taken. There were two minutes of the briskest fighting, watched with eager interest by the crowd of juniors, and then Taffy went down, with Redfern's gloved fist under his chin. He dropped with an audible bump; but he was up again in a second, only to fall again, and he was on the ground when time was called.

Rake helped him up, with a gloomy expression on his face that exasperated Taffy.

"That was another fluke," said Taffy, sipping water.

"Ye-es! A few more flukes like that, and you're done for, though!"

"Oh, ring off!"

"Why don't you put your beef into it?" demanded Rake. "You've got the honour of the Modern side to think of. Put your beef into it!"

"Well, you're a nice, cheerful sort of idiot

to be a chap's second in a fight—I don't think!" said Taffy, glowering at him.

"Well, I think you ought to put your beef into it. This isn't a bit of amusement for you; it concerns the whole side."

B-r-r-r!

Taffy looked a little unsteady as he walked up for the sixth round. Redfern stood like a rock. Taffy found it a little difficult to see with one eye closed, and his nose swollen to nearly twice its natural size; at least, that was what it felt like. But he threw himself into that round desperately.

But Redfern's guard was not to be passed. Not a single tap reached the new boy's face; while rap after rap came home, upon Taffy. The Classics were crowing with delight now. It was getting clear that Taffy would not win.

Rap, rap, rap!

Redfern's fists came in like lightning, and Taffy did not stop them. He went down like a log.

Bump!

"Bravo!" yelled the Classics; and even the Moderns, like the Tuscans of old, could scarce forbear a cheer.

"Bravo, Reddy! Hurrah!"

Vernon looked anxiously at his friend as the minute crept by. Only one minute was allowed between the rounds, and Taffy did not look as if he would be ready for the seventh.

Rake was just as anxious, and somewhat indignant. Taffy had always had the reputation of being an invincible fighting-man, and what did he mean by getting licked like this? That was how Rake looked at it.

"Think you'll go on?" he asked.

"Think! Ass! Of course I'm going on."

"Better chuck it, you know. You're done."

"Don't be an ass! I'm going to lick him."

"You might have, if you'd put your beef into it. But now—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Time!"

Taffy staggered to his feet, and almost fell. There was a yell from the Classics.

"Redfern wins!"

"Bravo!"

"Rats!" shrieked Taffy. "I'm not done. I tell you, I'm going on! Shut up! Go and eat coke! I'm ready!"

And he staggered into the ring.

"Better chuck it, chappy!" said Vernon, in a low voice. "The game's up."

"Bosh!"

"Really, chappy—"

"Rats!"

Redfern toed the line. He was looking groggy himself now; he had had plenty of punishment. But he was quite fit to go on.

"Hang it, kids, let's call it a draw!" said Redfern impulsively. "I don't want to go on."

"Confess you're licked, then!"

"Licked!" Redfern laughed. "Rats, and many of 'em!"

"Then come on!"

And the seventh—and last—round commenced. Taffy hit out blindly, and his blows were guarded with ease. Redfern could have punished him terribly, but he did not. Only towards the end of the round, when Taffy could hardly keep his feet, Redfern gave him a gentle tap that made him sit on the grass.

Rake dragged him upon his knee. Taffy was gasping, and it was pretty clear even to himself that he could not go on. Vernon kept his eye on his watch.

"Time!"

Taffy tottered up, and fell again. Rake caught him.

"It's all up!" said Rake. "My man's licked!"

And he threw up the sponge. Perhaps it was an accident—and perhaps it wasn't—but the sponge descended upon Brown's face as he opened his mouth to give a tremendous cheer.

"Hurrah! Ow! Gr-r-r-rooooch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You ass!" roared Brown.

"What did you do—oooch!—do that for? Groo!"

"I was only chucking up the sponge," said Rake innocently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then you can have it back!"

grunted Brown; and he sent it in as if it were a cricket-ball he was fielding, and it landed on Rake's nose with a squelch.

Skelton, in the fullness of his heart, rushed at Redfern, and hugged him. The Classical juniors were wild with delight.

"We've won!"

chuckled Skelton.

"Oh, my only summer hat! It's ripping! Licked, by George! The Classical side is top side now, my sons! What?"

"Yes, rather! Hurrah!"



Taffy & Co. were painting away industriously—so industriously that they did not for the moment perceive the angry Classics standing in the doorway.

Redfern put on his jacket and walked over to Taffy. Taffy and Rake were just concluding a little argument. Rake was still convinced that the affair would have gone better for the Modern side if Taffy had taken his advice.

"You see, old fellow, you should have put your beef into it!" explained Rake.

Taffy looked at him. He was not feeling in the best temper in the world just then, and Rake could not be called tactful. Taffy did not reply. He simply landed out with his right, and the astounded Rake caught it on the chin, and rolled over. He sat up and blinked in amazed indignation at Taffy.

"What on earth—" said Taffy. "Did I put enough beef into that, you ass, or shall I give you another?"

Rake apparently thought that one sample was enough, for he hurriedly got out of Taffy's reach. Taffy put on his outer garments, with the help of Vernon. Vernon was sympathetic, but tactful enough to say nothing. Taffy looked rather grimly at Redfern as the latter came towards him. Redfern grinned cheerfully, and held out his hand.

"Give us your fin, old son!" he said. "No malice, I hope? It was a jolly good fight; and if you'd kept on your pins for another round, I don't think I could have kept on mine."

There was no resisting Redfern's good temper, and the utter absence of anything like crowing in his manner. Taffy grinned, and took his hand.

"You're a decent sort," he said; "and—and I'm jolly glad we had the gloves on, after all."

"So am I," said Redfern, rubbing his nose. "No harm in a little friendly punching-bee, so long as a chap doesn't lose his temper; and I've always noticed that you get on better with a chap after you've punched his nose once or twice."

Taffy chuckled.

"Then we shall get on all right," he said. Redfern was the hero of the Classics as he strolled away. Everybody wanted to walk with him, but Skelton and Brown linked arms with him, and glared at anybody who tried to get too near.

Redfern belonged to them, and they marched him off in triumph. At the corner of the chapel railings they almost ran into a Sixth-Former, who had evidently been watching the fight. It was Ransome. He gave Redfern a nod.

"Jolly good!" he said. "You can handle the gloves well, Redfern minor. Hanged if you don't put them up like a real pug. You like that game, eh?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Redfern, rather surprised that a Sixth-Former should take any interest in a junior "scrap." "I generally manage to hold my own, that's all."

"Good—very good! You ought to keep in practice. I like the way you handled Morgan. And look here, young Redfern, after tea to-night you can stay in my study, and I'll put you up to some wheezes in the boxing line."

"Thank you very much!" said Redfern wondrously.

Skelton and Brown looked at him very curiously as they strolled on.

"Ransome seems to have taken a big fancy to you," said Skelton. "What's his little game, I wonder? He's the deapest card in the school. I'll bet he's thinking of some way to make use of you. Nobody likes Ransome."

And Redfern could not help thinking that, in spite of the senior's kindness to him, he did not like him either. There was a peculiar glimmer in Ransome's eyes as he looked after the well-set-up form of the new boy.

"Clever—very clever!" he muttered. "Just what I've been looking for—just the thing! I wonder if I could work it—I wonder?"

And Ransome's face was dark with thought as he walked away. Redfern would have been astonished if he had known what line the senior's reflections were following.

The Amateur Painters.

REDFERN settled down to St. Dolly's in a very short time. During the next few days he made himself quite at home, and the way he "dropped into" the curious warfare that raged among the juniors of St. Dorothy's excited the admiration of his friends.

Redfern was a Classical to the finger-tips, and he could "slang" the Moderns with a flow of eloquence that was the despair of the other Classics. He entered into any "jape" that was planned against the rival side with a keenness that was wholly praiseworthy, from the junior point of view, though the prefects took a somewhat different view of it.

What Dr. Cranston and the masters thought of the Classical-Modern warfare the youngsters did not know; but they knew what the prefects thought, the prefects having a way of stating their opinions forcibly, with the assistance of canes, straps, and sometimes cricket-stumps to back up the mere words.

But, after all, a licking was only a licking, and the St. Dolly's juniors prided themselves upon not being "soft." They thrived on lickings; they flourished on impots; and, as a matter of fact, the rivalry between the youngsters was to a great extent shared among the seniors.

Only the senior rivalry found its expression chiefly on the cricket-field, or on the river, or in the gym. It was not considered "form" for seniors to row in the passages.

Redfern had added considerably to the beauty of the study he shared with Skelton

and Brown. His cornet occupied one corner, in its case, and his pictures hung on the walls. An artist, perhaps, would have preferred those pictures with their faces to the walls; but to Redfern's mind they were works of art, and Skelton and Brown fully agreed with him.

One was a highly-coloured picture of a race-horse, the other represented Mr. Sullivan in pugilistic attitude. Redfern, having learned that it was the custom for juniors to share the expense of furnishing their study, wanted to make some contribution to improve the place, so as not to feel that he was sponging on his new chums.

After some deliberation, in which the three carefully put their heads together and considered the matter, it was decided that, in addition to the works of art, Redfern should purchase a looking-glass to go over the mantelpiece.

Phipps, of the Fourth, knew a shop in Okeholme where they had one that would just fit at a reasonable figure, and it was accordingly purchased on the first half-holiday, and conveyed in triumph to the study, and fixed up there.

There was no doubt that it improved the room. Skelton said that it gave you an impression of vastness as you entered the door. Redfern agreed that it made the room look bigger. Taffy & Co. looked in when they heard the hammering, and the Classical juniors bestowed patronising smiles upon them.

"Hallo! What's all that knocking about?" asked Taffy.

Taffy's face had quite recovered from the pommelling behind the chapel, and was as good-looking and cheerful as ever.

"Oh, we're only putting up our mirror," said Skelton carelessly.

"Your what?"

"Your—er—which?" asked Vernon.

"Our mirror."

"The 'Daily Mirror,' do you mean?"

"Oh, don't be an ass, Taffy! I know it's rather decent to have a looking-glass over one's mantelpiece in the Fourth. We can't stand an unfurnished barrack like you Modern chaps, though, you know."

Taffy grinned.

"Oh, is that a mirror? I thought it was one of those queer glasses, you know, that make your face look a funny shape—"

"Look here, this is a first-class, plate-glass mirror!" exclaimed Skelton indignantly. "Lot you know about mirrors!"

"Seems to twist up the face a lot," said Taffy, squinting into it. "Makes my features look as if they'd been tied in knots."

"Oh, that isn't the glass!" said Redfern sweetly, with an emphasis on the word glass; and his chums burst into a roar. Taffy turned red.

"It's a jolly good glass," said Brown.

"Excuse me, Taffy, old chap. I don't mind your looking into it, only—er—I'm afraid you might crack it, you know."

"Yah! Rats!" said Taffy, as he turned to the door, feeling defeated. "By the way, did you know our study was going to be fresh papered this term?"

"Stuff!" said Skelton.

"Fact!"

"Rats!"

But it proved to be a fact. The next day Taffy & Co. carried their books out of the study with a very impressive air, so as to allow the paperhanger full scope.

The study certainly needed papering out. Phipps said that it couldn't have been papered since the Modern side was started at St. Dolly's; while Coke was of the opinion that the newest paper would soon look like that if Modern kids were in the study. But Taffy & Co. only smiled superior. Their newly-papered study looked very fresh and clean when they reoccupied it, and they stood a tea to half the Modern side in the Fourth to celebrate it.

"Lot of fuss those Mods are making over a rotten bob paper in their rotten study," Skelton said, in his study, at tea. "They seem to think it's one up against us. Of course, it isn't."

"Of course not," said Brown. "Why, we wouldn't have this study papered out even if the Head offered it."

"Bosh!" said Redfern. "We would. And it is one up against us, too. Taffy & Co. are crowing about it. They say that any dirty old study is good enough for us, and that the Head knows it."

"I've a jolly good mind to ask the Head to do ours out, too!" exclaimed Skelton.

"We could do it ourselves," suggested Brown.

Redfern shook his head.

"Too jolly expensive; and, besides, it would be a muck. But I'll tell you what we could do. The paper in this study isn't bad, but the paint is old and grubby. If we could fresh paint it, the room would look as good as new, and would jolly well knock spots off any old study on the Modern side. What?"

Skelton gave the table a tremendous thump to show his enthusiastic approval of the idea. Brown gave a yell.

"You ass! Ow!"

"What's the matter with you?"

"Gr-r! I'm scalded. You ass, you've made me spill my tea all over my trousers!" yelled Brown. "Yow—wow!"

"Oh, rats! What a fuss to make over a little tea on your trucks," said Skelton, with a sniff.

"Look here, Reddy, that's a jolly good idea. We could get the paint down from Okeholme this very evening, and start painting out the study. Of course, the paint would have to be mixed first. That would take some time. Let's strike the iron while it's hot."

"What do you say, Browney?"

"I'm going to change my trousers."

"Oh, blow your old trousers!" growled Skelton. "I'm getting fed up with you and your mouldy old trousers!"

"They're not mouldy old trousers!" exclaimed Brown indignantly. "They're my Sunday bags I've only just taken for every day. Swamped all over with tea! Yah, you ass!"

"Oh, go and change 'em—or go and eat coke! We'll jolly well work this, Reddy. You can go and ask your brother for a pass down to Okeholme, and go on my bike."

"Good wheeze." Redfern became grave the next moment. "I don't know about asking my brother for a pass—"

"What on earth's the good of having a brother in the Sixth, and a prefect, too, if you don't make use of him?" demanded Skelton. "It's a bit up against a chap in the Fourth, having a prefect for a brother. It's hard cheese if you can't use him."

Redfern laughed.

"All the same, I think I'll ask Lunsford."

And as soon as tea was finished Redfern went to look for the captain of St. Dolly's. He had a very natural diffidence about seeming to presume upon his relationship to Arthur; and, indeed, Arthur had warned him pretty plainly not to do so. As it happened, Redfern major was in Lunsford's study when the junior arrived there.

"Come in, kid," said Lunsford; and Redfern went in.

Arthur looked at him coldly enough, and gave the slightest of nods.

"Well, what is it?" said Lunsford. "Have you been getting into another scrape?"

"Oh, no, Lunsford. I—I wanted to ask you for a pass."

"Oh! Another little expedition out of bounds—eh?"

Arthur Redfern walked to the window, and stood looking out. Redfern knew that his brother's face was crimson.

"I want to go down to the village on Skelton's bike, please," said Redfern. "It's only to get some paint. I shall be back in half an hour."

Lunsford hesitated a moment.

"I don't know about that," he said. "What do you think, Arthur? You remember what I told you about this young sweep's escapade the other night—the night he came to St. Dolly's?"

"Yes," said Arthur shortly.

"I suppose your brother's given you a lecture on the subject, young Redfern, so we'll let it drop. I'll give you the pass," said Lunsford good-naturedly.

And he scribbled on a paper and handed it over. Redfern thanked him gratefully enough, and left the study.

Skelton met him in the passage.

"Got the pass?"

"Yes; that's all right."

"Good! Come to the bike-shed, and I'll get out my jigger. Brown and I'll get the study ready while you're gone."

"Right-ho!"

And Redfern was soon buzzing off on Skelton's bicycle. Skelton and Brown proceeded to make ready in the study for the painting. Old newspapers were begged or borrowed, and carefully spread over the floor and carpet, and pinned over the wallpaper where there was danger of its being splashed. Books and papers and small articles of furniture were carried out of the way into another Classical study.

These unusual movements, naturally, were not long in attracting attention. A crowd gathered in the passage to look-in, among them a good number of Modern youths. Taffy & Co. made polite inquiries as to the meaning of it all, but were vouchsafed no information.

"It's a new dodge of papering a room with old newspapers," said Taffy confidentially. "I shouldn't care for it much in my study; but I dare say it's quite good enough for these Classical kids."

And the Moderns chuckled.

"Here, get out of the way!" said a cheery voice in the passage. "Squirm off, you Modern worms, or I shall tread on you."

It was Redfern, laden with parcels. He brought them into the study, and plumped them down on the table. There were tins of paint, bottles of oils, brushes, and so forth. The crowd looked on with great interest as the various articles were turned out upon the table.

"My hat!" said Taffy. "It's paint!"

"By Jove! What are you going to do with it, chappies?"

"Well, we're not going to eat it," said Redfern sarcastically. "We're going to paint the woodwork in the study—a nice, artistic, art shade of pale green. I rather think it will knock spots off your mouldy old study, too."

"What-ho!" said Skelton.

Taking no notice of the Modern gibes, the Classical chums set to work. Tins of paint were emptied into a big mixing pail, with turpentine added, and worked up with a stick. White lead was added to bring it to the required artistic tone of pale green. Redfern mixed and mixed, and mixed. The juniors at the open door grinned and chuckled and chipped to their heart's content without disturbing the equanimity of the mixer.

Redfern had his back to the door, and did not turn his head once. Rake winked at his chums, and stole quietly into the study. He intended to give Redfern's bent head a slight push which would dip his face into the pail of paint. Skelton and Brown shouted a warning, but it was not needed. Redfern seemed to have eyes in the back of his head, for he was quite on his guard.

He whisked round in a second, the stick with which he had been mixing the paint in his hand. In an instant it was dabbed on Rake's nose, and Rake started back with a wild yell.

There was plenty of paint on the stick, great chunks of it not yet liquefied. A big chunk stuck on Rake's nose, and a stream of it ran down his chin and his chest.

"Ow!" he roared. "Ow—yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Skelton. "Give him some more!"

But Rake did not wait for any more. The Modern juniors fled.

They did not return to mock the painters that evening. Taffy and Rake, in fact, had plenty to do until bedtime in getting rid of the paint. By bedtime, the Classical chums had finished mixing the paint, and washed down the woodwork ready for the first coat.

"We'll lay the first coat on to-morrow," said Redfern. "We can do it before dinner. Then it will be dry enough to take the second coat in the evening. You have to paint things twice, you know; I've seen painters do it. The study will look ripping, and will jolly well knock spots off Taffy's den!"

And the chums went up to bed very cheerfully. There was some whispering going on among the Modern juniors in the dormitory, whispering that was occasionally broken by chuckles and sniggers; but the Classics held their noses in the air, and took no notice.

The next morning Taffy & Co. were grinning at breakfast, and throughout morning lessons they were taken with little fits of sniggering. They seemed to be enjoying a joke among themselves, but the Classics could not guess what it was.

"Let 'em snigger," said Redfern. "They'll look green when they see our study done up in ripping style, I can tell you."

Taffy & Co. hurried away immediately classes were dismissed that morning. As Redfern and his friends strolled down the passage, a Modern junior came bolting by.

"Hallo, Skelton!" he exclaimed. "Did you tell young Norton he could take your jigger to pieces?"

"What?" roared Skelton.

"You'd better buzz off to the bike-shed, then."

"Here, come on, you kids," said Skelton. "My jigger to pieces! My hat! I'll take him to pieces! Come on!"

The chums dashed away in the direction of the bicycle-shed. They rushed into it, Skelton in a towering rage, prepared to massacre upon the spot the Third-Form fag who had dared to take his bicycle to pieces. But the shed was empty, save for the bicycles, and Skelton's jigger was unharmed upon its stand. As they stared round them in surprise, the door banged shut, and a key clicked in the lock. Redfern rushed at the door; it was fast!

He burst into a laugh.

"We're locked in! It was only a joke!"

"The young rotter!" exclaimed Skelton wrathfully. "He said—"

"Well, no, he didn't say your bike was taken to pieces; he asked you if you had told young Norton he could do it!" grinned Redfern. "Never mind. Here, open this door!"

There was a chuckle, and a sound of retreating footsteps. The Modern junior was gone. Redfern wrinkled his brows.

"We're locked in! Look here, there may be something more in this. They want to get us out of the way for something. My hat! If they start mucking about with the paint in the study!"

"That's it!" shouted Skelton. "They're going to collar our paint, after we've had all the trouble of mixing it. Here, we must get out!"

But it was not so easy to get out. The door was fast, and the window was barred. But Redfern did not stand upon ceremony. He found a hammer, and started on the bar of the window. In five or six minutes he had hammered it away. He squeezed through the window, and then helped his chums out.

"Come on!" he muttered.

They dashed away at top speed in the direction of the schoolhouse. They ran into the house, and tore up the stairs. The door of Skelton's study was wide open, and the sound of chuckles and voices proceeded from it.

"Shove it on a little thicker, Rakey!"

"Right you are!"

"Some more on the clock, Verny. You're not half painting it!"

"Really, chappy!"

"I'll finish the window. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Classical chums rushed breathlessly on. They dashed into the study, and halted, staring blankly at the scene before them.

Taffy & Co. were there, in all their glory. They had their sleeves rolled up, and aprons on, and paint-brushes in their hands. They were painting away industriously—so industriously that they did not for the moment perceive the Classics in the doorway. Taffy was painting the window, giving the glass the thickest coat he could possibly lay on, and throwing the whole study into a curious green light. Vernon was painting the clock, and Rake the looking-glass over the mantelpiece. They had already painted the glass doors of the bookcase and the inkstand, and the crockery-ware, and the kettle and the fender.

"M-m-m-my hat!" gasped Redfern.

The painters jumped. They had not expected the Classics just then.

"Hallo! 'Ware cads!" ejaculated Taffy. And the Modern chums were instantly on the defensive.

(Another rattling long instalment next week.)