

# The Boys' Realm 19

*of Sport & Adventure.*



EVE  
WELS  
ALBIC  
KICK OFF

**AFTER  
THE MATCH!**

**CAPTAIN JACK** A STIRRING TALE OF LEAGUE FOOTBALL BY A. S. HARDY





# REDFERN MINOR.

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

"Ransome says I am to have twenty pounds if I win?"  
 "Oh, he did, did he?"  
 "Yes. I suppose it's all right?"  
 Mr. Cunliffe gave a laugh, in which the others joined.  
 "The kid can look out for himself, for all he looks so innocent," remarked Mr. Spooner.  
 "What do you want twenty quid for, youngster?"  
 "That's my affair," said Redfern coolly. "I want it, and if I win I'm going to have it."  
 "It's all right, kid," said Mr. Cunliffe good-naturedly. "There's a purse of twenty thick 'uns for the winner, and if you beat the Chicken it's yours. Look 'ere, if you feel safe about the event, I'll lay a quid or two on for you, if you like, with the bookies. I can get long odds, and you might net a tenner besides."  
 Redfern shook his head.  
 "No, thanks, sir."  
 "You don't feel sure?"  
 "I don't know yet. I haven't seen the other fellow. But it's not that. I don't want to bet."

"You're willing to prize-fight and not to bet?" said Mr. Cunliffe, with a sneer; and Redfern turned crimson. "Well, have it your own way; it's nothing to me."  
 "Here's the Chicken," said Mr. Spooner.  
 A young fellow, about three years older than Redfern, entered. The junior of St. Dolly's looked at him with quick curiosity.  
 This was the antagonist he was to meet in the ring.

The Chicken was not much taller than Redfern, in spite of his years, but he was much more broadly built, and his arms looked like legs of mutton. His face was hard and harsh, and bore the marks of previous encounters. There was a cut on his lip that twisted it, and gave his mouth a peculiar expression of being perpetually on the grin. His eyes were small and sunken, but very keen and quick. He was heavier, and evidently stronger, than Redfern, though hardly taller; and at a superficial glance few would have hesitated to pronounce that the Chicken would prove an easy victor in the coming fight.

He nodded to Mr. Cunliffe, who hastened to introduce him to Redfern. The Chicken grinned good-naturedly at the junior from St. Dolly's.  
 He was evidently amused at the idea of the schoolboy standing up to him in the ring.  
 And Redfern, now that he had seen his opponent, understood what a terrible task he had taken upon himself. Defeat was at least as likely as victory, and it was quite on the cards that he had undertaken the whole disgraceful business for nothing—that he would be beaten, and return to St. Dolly's without the power to help Arthur out of his scrape. But at the thought of that his lips set and his eyes flashed. He would be killed before he would give in! He would save Arthur!

Ransome came back from the other room, his face flushed and his eyes sparkling. He had evidently the highest hopes. Mr. Cunliffe looked at his watch.  
 "You can rely on me, if not on Ransome, Spooner," said Mr. Cunliffe.  
 "Didn't I have an eye on the kid the first time I saw him? Look at him—pinch him! You'll see that he's alive all over."  
 Redfern endured it patiently as the men gathered round him, and accepted Mr. Cunliffe's invitation to look at him and pinch him. Ransome made him take his jacket and waistcoat off, and he was looked at, punched, and pinched till they were satisfied.  
 "Look at them muscles," said Mr. Cunliffe. "Pinch 'em. They're the real stuff. He don't mind it, either; he's got grit. It ain't the muscle only, though; he's hard—he's fit! Blessed if the kid ain't trained as hard as I've seen some reg'lar pugs!"  
 "Well, you ain't far wrong there," admitted Mr. Spooner. "The kid keeps himself fit. How do you do it, youngster?"  
 "Cricket," said Redfern—"football."  
 The laconic reply caused a laugh. Rough and unpleasant as they were in many respects, the men in the dressing-room seemed very good-natured, once they had their confidence in Mr. Cunliffe's champion restored. Ransome viewed the whole scene irritably.  
 The voices on the other side of the canvas hangings seemed to grow louder, and there was a sound of stamping on the floor.  
 Mr. Cunliffe chuckled.  
 "They're getting impatient."  
 "Many there?" asked Ransome.  
 "Four dozen, at least—three bookies."  
 "Good!"  
 Ransome passed into the other part of the shed. The canvas dropped behind him, but not before Redfern had caught a glimpse of a brilliantly-lighted and crowded room, with a ring roped off for the fight.  
 Mr. Cunliffe and the others gathered, and conversed in low, eager tones. Redfern seemed forgotten for the moment. But Redfern had not come there for nothing, and he approached Mr. Cunliffe, and tapped his arm. The landlord of the Green Man looked down at him.  
 "What do you want, youngster?"

"Look to the kid, Ransome, and bring him in."  
 "All right."  
 Ransome helped Redfern to change. No close chum could have been more careful of him than Ransome was; but the boy was not grateful. Ransome was thinking of himself only; he would net a small fortune if Redfern won—and if he lost—But the cad of the Sixth hardly dared to think of that. With all his cunning and caution, Ransome had plunged deep this time—very deep.  
 "Feel fit, kid?"  
 "Fit as a fiddle!"  
 "You're not nervous?"  
 "No."  
 "That's right," said Ransome. "Remember what depends upon the show you make."  
 "I'm not likely to forget."  
 "Come on, then."  
 And they passed the canvas into the crowded room, amid the glare of light and the buzz of voices.

### Skelton Means Business.

SKELTON wrenched himself away from Taffy and staggered to his feet. His collar was torn out, his necktie flying in the wind. His hair resembled a mop; his face was flushed and furious.  
 "You ass!" he roared. "You—you Welsh rabbit!"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!" gasped Taffy.  
 "You—you frabjous duffer! You've mucked up everything now."  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "You—you—Oh, there ain't a word! Are you off your rocker? What have you—"  
 "Oh, hold me!" gasped Taffy, hanging on to the gate while he gasped with laughter. "Hold me, somebody! My ribs won't stand much more!"  
 "Awfully sorry, chappies!" said Vernon.  
 "Aw'ly sorry, you know! But we had to do it."  
 "Just what I was going to say," remarked Rake.

"You—you burbling rotters!" panted Skelton. "Reddy's gone, now—the dooce knows where!"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 Skelton and Brown glared at the Modern trio. They were greatly inclined to hurl themselves upon the Moderns, and smite them hip and thigh. But they restrained. That was not the way to recover Reddy; and, besides, the Commercial youths were three to two.  
 "You frabjous cuckoos!" said Skelton, in measured tones. "Reddy's got away now, and we sha'n't be able to find him. I've a good mind to wipe up the ground with you."  
 "Ha, ha! Wipe away!"  
 "Br-r-r! You're not worth it."  
 "Lucky for somebody you're not worth it!" grinned Taffy. And the Co. chuckled, while Skelton and Brown tramped angrily into the lane.  
 "Well, we've kept our word to Reddy," said Taffy, with a grin. "We've saved him from his friends."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Let's get on with the sprinting."  
 And the Modern chums fitted away. Skelton and Brown looked up and down the lane in vain. Five minutes had elapsed since Redfern minor went out, and there wasn't the slightest chance of getting on his track now.  
 "The worm!" said Skelton wrathfully, as they turned back to St. Dolly's. "Fancy giving us the slip like this!"  
 "It was got up between him and the Mods," said Brown III. thoughtfully.  
 Skelton nodded.  
 "Yes, Taffy & Co. backed him up. Rotten of Reddy to take their help against us. I shall punch his head when he comes in. But he must have been mighty anxious to get away," went on Skelton thoughtfully, as they walked through the dusk of the quadrangle towards the house. "I don't catch on at all. He's in something with that cad, Ransome. But what is it? Where has he gone?"  
 "Blessed if I know!"  
 Skelton set his teeth hard.  
 "Look here, Browney, we're Reddy's chums, though he hasn't been very chummy just now. We're bound to stand by him."  
 "Right you are!"  
 "Let's go and see Ransome about it."  
 "Ransome! Phew!"  
 "We'll tell him straight that we're not going to have any of his hanky-panky," said Skelton resolutely. "We're not going to have Reddy ruined to please him."  
 "He'll kick us out of his study."  
 "Let him!"  
 "Oh, all right; I'm game, if you are."

And the chums of the Fourth proceeded to Ransome's study. But Ransome's study was dark and empty. Then they went to the senior common-room. There were a good many Sixth-Formers there, but Ransome was not among them.  
 They stopped in the passage to consider the matter.  
 "He must have gone out," said Brown, with a sidelong look at Skelton. "It looks as if he and Reddy are together."  
 "By George! The cad—"  
 Skelton broke off suddenly, as Lunsford of the Sixth came along the passage. The captain of St. Dolly's glanced at them. He had evidently overheard Skelton's hot words. The junior coloured under his glance.  
 "Hallo! What's the trouble?" said Lunsford, in his good-natured way.  
 "I—I—Have you seen Ransome, Lunsford?"  
 "Ransome? I think he's gone out."  
 "Oh, thanks!"  
 And the juniors hurried away before the captain of St. Dolly's could say anything further. Lunsford glanced after them rather curiously, and then, dismissing the matter from his mind, went into the common-room.  
 Skelton hurried straight on, and Brown caught at his sleeve.  
 "Where are you going, Skelty?"  
 "To see Redfern major."  
 "But—"  
 "Come on!"

Brown said no more, and they arrived at the door of Redfern major's study. Arthur was at home, and his voice impatiently bade them come in when Skelton knocked.  
 The prefect was sitting in his armchair, and the gas was not lighted in the study. It surprised the juniors to see him sitting in the dark. There was only a faint glimmer of starlight at the window, and it dimly revealed the form of the prefect.  
 "Who's there?" growled Arthur.  
 "It's me," said Skelton, uneasily and ungrammatically.  
 "What do you want?"  
 "Do you know where Ransome is?"  
 "Ransome? No."  
 "He's gone out," said Skelton.  
 "I believe so. What the dickens has it to do with you, you cheeky young sweep?" said Arthur, sitting bolt upright in the chair in his surprise.  
 "I want to see him," said Skelton resolutely. "You know the kind of chap he is, Redfern major—"  
 "You cheeky young rascal! Did you come here for a licking?"  
 "Oh, I've heard enough of that sort of talk," said Skelton, rather surprised himself at his nerve in taking such a tone with a prefect and a Sixth-Former. "Look here, I mean business! You can lick me if you like, but I'm going to look after Reddy. I know he came jolly near being expelled the other day, because—"

Arthur gasped, but did not speak.  
 "Well, he's not going to be expelled, if I can help it," said Skelton defiantly, if a little disconnectedly. "He's gone out, and Ransome's gone out, and they're mixed up together in something. I'm not going to have it. Reddy is fool enough to make a scapegoat of himself any day for somebody else. I tell you, he's jolly well not going to be expelled for you, or anybody else. He would punch my head if he knew I was talking to you like this. I don't care! I'm jolly well going to look after him!"  
 And, having delivered himself of the outburst, Skelton stood panting and breathless, more than half expecting to be bundled neck and crop out of the room.  
 But that did not happen.  
 Arthur Redfern struck a match, and lighted the gas. His face was very white, and lines of painful thought were on his brow. He looked directly at Skelton.  
 "Now, explain what you mean! You say that my minor has gone out with Ransome."  
 "Well, they're both gone out," said Skelton,



Crash! came the Chicken's left on his opponent's chin, and Redfern minor went down like a log.



"and I know they've been doing a lot of chow-wowing, and they've got mixed up in something. I know jolly well what it is—Ransome is trying to make Reddy like himself. I know his game. I know he wanted me to fetch him cigarettes and spirits when I fagged for him, and I wouldn't. And he sha'n't drag Reddy into anything, so there!"

"You don't suppose that I want him to drag my young brother into anything, do you?" said Arthur quietly.

"Well, stop him, then."

"If there is anything of the sort going on, I shall certainly stop it," said Arthur. "You can rely upon that. I hope you are mistaken."

"So do I," said Skelton. "But I know jolly well I'm not."

Arthur picked up his cap.

"You're going to look for them?"

"Yes."

The prefect left the study without another word. Skelton and Brown remained staring at one another rather sheepishly.

"Blessed if I know what to think!" grunted Skelton. "I suppose he means what he says. He has played it pretty low-down once or twice, as we know; but he can't want his minor ruined by that rotten cad."

"Better leave it to him, anyway."

And Skelton agreed that it was the best thing to be done, for the present, at all events. But he was very uneasy in his mind; but his uneasiness was as nothing compared with Arthur Redfern's.

Arthur strode savagely across the quadrangle in the gloom, and let himself out into the lane. His brow was blackly knitted.

He had not set his minor a good example, and he had shown him little kindness since his coming to St. Dolly's. He had weakly yielded to Ransome in allowing the junior to come into connection with Cunliffe and his set at all. But he had been stubborn upon one point—Redfern minor should not follow in the same path that his elder brother had followed.

Ruin stared Redfern major in the face. That ruin should never be shared by his minor; and since the sacrifice Sidney had made for him, Arthur's resolution had become more fixed. Ransome had affected to agree; but now it was revealed like a flash to the prefect that his agreement was one more piece of treachery.

If Ransome was breaking faith, if Sidney was with him, Arthur guessed where he could find them. With a black brow he strode on the Wyndale lane. His destination was the public-house of Mr. Cunliffe.

**In the Ring.**

"**E**RE they are!"

The stamping and growling in the shed ceased, and every eye was turned eagerly upon the two champions.

There was a ripple of raucous laughter as Redfern minor was seen. A red-faced bookmaker waved a fat, red hand with rings on it.

"Anything you like agin the kid?"

And the crowd laughed again.

To their minds it was absurd to pit this lad against the Chicken, who had come through a score of fights with credit, if not always with success. The bookmakers were grinning, and Ransome had no difficulty in getting the odds he wanted. Mr. Cunliffe and his friends were doing very well—if Redfern won!

Redfern flushed red at the insulting laughter. Nobody there, except his own immediate backers, believed that he had any chance against the Chicken.

But he knew very well that the opinion of a man like Cunliffe, and of a fellow like Ransome, weighed more than the views of this crowd, founded on a hasty survey.

The advantages of the Chicken were apparent to every eye—breadth of shoulder, length of reach, huge strength and endurance, and dogged obstinacy. Redfern's advantages were not so easy to see, but they were there, nevertheless.

Ransome was confident. The bets he was booking showed that. The chuckles of the crowd only brought a quiet smile to his face.

And that smile was very encouraging to Redfern minor.

The Chicken grinned and winked at the people round, as if to enter into the general joke. He took the whole thing humorously. The men there took it humorously, too; and some who would have been disappointed and angry at the sight of Redfern, recovered their good temper when they found that there were persons present ready to take the bets they laid against the schoolboy.

"It's a blooming joke!" said a thick-set, red-faced man, whose breath, as he spoke, diffused a strong flavour of rum for a considerable distance round him. "It's a joke of Cunliffe's."

"Why didn't you bring a kid out of the nursery, Cunliffe?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You might as well set up a jack-rabbit agin the Chicken!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"I'm laying money on him," said Mr. Cunliffe, with a genial grin.

"Why don't you chuck it into the river, and save time?" demanded the red-faced man.

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"Put your brass on your opinion, then, Mr. Buckle," said Cunliffe, with a grin.

"You bet!" said Mr. Buckle promptly.

The whole scene, the whole talk, sickened Redfern. He felt as if he had got into a new world—a world of greed and brutality, of vulgarity and sordidness. Was it really he—Redfern minor, of the Fourth Form at St. Dolly's—who was standing here among this crew of gamblers, ruffians, and sharpers? It seemed like some evil dream!

Ransome glanced at him sharply.

"Pull yourself together," he said, in a whisper. "What's the matter with you? What are you mooning about?"

Redfern flushed hotly.

"I'm all right!"

The referee, a stout man, in a fancy waist-coat, who looked considerably more decent than any of Mr. Cunliffe's friends, glanced quizzically at Redfern minor; but at the second glance his expression changed a little. It occurred to him then that the lad had a chance.

Redfern had stripped for the fight in the dressing-room. It only remained to don the gloves, and step into the ring.

Ransome was to be his second. The cad of St. Dolly's had made all preparations. He helped Redfern on with the gloves.

The timekeeper had taken out his watch.

"You're ready, kid?" whispered Ransome.

For one moment his confidence seemed to be shaken, and a tone of anxiety crept into his voice.

Redfern nodded.

"I'm ready."

"Mind, this isn't an easy matter. It's not like fighting Morgan or Skelton at St. Dolly's," whispered Ransome hurriedly.

"You'll have all your work cut out to win."

"I know that."

"The Chicken is a hard hitter, and if you let him get in some of his heavy body-blows, you are done for. Mind that; and mind you don't get too close either. I've seen the

"Licked at the start!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"Take him home to bed!"

"Give him some milk!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

And then the rude and ill-natured jests died into sudden silence. The Chicken had made a sudden rush, determined to bring things to a climax. The antagonists were at close quarters, and all of a sudden the fighting became fast and furious.

**Blow for Blow.**

**R**EDFERN MINOR set his teeth hard. The whole scene was so new and strange to him that, in spite of his determination, it was not surprising that he was not quite himself at first. He had taken Ransome's advice in keeping on the defensive at the start, and it had served him well; but the Chicken was upon him now like a whirlwind.

Redfern was still upon the defensive. He could do no more, but it looked doubtful whether he would be able to save himself. The Chicken's blows came like lightning, drive after drive that looked capable of felling an ox, and yet were delivered with amazing rapidity.


All Redfern knew of guarding came into play then in resisting that tremendous attack. The Chicken felt humiliated that such an opponent should stand up to him at all, and he was determined to end it in a single round.

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Chicken fight before, you know. He has the strength of an ox, and he could smash you with one straight blow, if you let him."

Redfern grinned faintly.

"I sha'n't let him if I can help it."

"Good! Mind, take it easy in the first round. He will try to force the fighting, and you must be on the defensive. Take his measure before you let yourself go."

"Right-ho!"

Redfern cast any depressing feelings from him now. He could not afford to look back. He must think of nothing but the conflict—the conflict, and victory. He had a terrible task to tackle, and it needed all his energies.

"Good!" said Ransome. "Go it!"

Redfern stepped into the ring. The timekeeper was looking at his watch. The Chicken stepped to meet his opponent with a grin on his face.

"Time!"

They shook hands, and then Redfern stepped quickly back, and was on the defensive in a flash.

The Chicken grinned, and advanced upon him, and Redfern went back and back, till he had been driven almost round the ring. Ransome's face never moved; but from the crowd came laughter and jeers.

But Redfern minor was made of sterner stuff than the Chicken and his admirers dreamed of in their philosophy.

His defence was splendid, considering; but the Chicken was putting his beef into it, as Mr. Buckle remarked, with a vengeance. It seemed as if he would simply sweep Redfern out of existence.

"Ah!" murmured Mr. Cunliffe.

The Chicken had "got home" at last. His heavy fist came upon Redfern's cheek, and the junior staggered.

Crash came the Chicken's left on his chin as he did so, and Redfern minor went down like a log.

Crash!

The crash upon the boards rang through the place. There was a laugh from the onlookers.

"Haw, haw!"

"Put him to bed now, Cunliffe!"

Cunliffe muttered something under his breath. The timekeeper was counting, and Redfern struggled up. If ten were counted before he was on his feet, he was licked; and the mere thought of the shame of being defeated in the first round seemed to imbue him with new life.

He struggled up; but the Chicken was ready, and he was swept down again with a

blow that made his head ring. He crashed on the boards.

"Time!"

Ransome drew a long, long breath.

The call of time came most opportunely for Redfern. He could not have gained his feet and stood up under the slogging blows of the Chicken.

The Chicken grinned as he went back to his corner. Redfern was breathing hard. He joined Ransome, who made a knee for him, and sponged his face quietly.

Redfern had expected fault-finding, if nothing more, and he was surprised that Ransome did not say a word.

"Time!"

Redfern minor stepped back briskly into the ring.

There was a hum of surprise from the spectators. They had expected to see him come up staggering and weak, if he came up to the scratch at all. To their surprise, he looked as fresh as when he had faced the Chicken for the first time, except for the marks of the blows upon his face.

"My 'at!" said Mr. Buckle. "There's something in the kid, arter all!"

"Oh, this round'll finish him!" said another.

Redfern heard the words, which were spoken quite in his hearing. A flash came into his eyes. If only to confound the prophets and disappoint the unfeeling onlookers who cared so little for his feelings, he was determined that the Chicken should never beat him.

The Chicken commenced the second round with the same tactics as before. He wanted to wipe Redfern off the ring, so to speak, and to show that he—the Chicken—was not the kind of pug to be tackled by a schoolboy.

But his attack, though as fast and furious as before, did not have the same effect.

Redfern was at home now; he was quite himself. He was as cool as an iceberg, and his eyes never wavered. His guard was perfect.

Ransome grinned with satisfaction, and glanced at Cunliffe; and the landlord of the Green Man glanced back with equal satisfaction.

Their champion was showing his quality now.

The Chicken, amazed and annoyed, redoubled his efforts. A little more wisdom would have shown him that he had underrated his opponent, and that his game was to draw Redfern, not to waste wind and strength in hammering attacks; but the Chicken, whatever he might be in other respects, was not, as Ransome had remarked, Redfern's equal in sense.

He allowed anger to urge him on, and instead of changing his tactics, he only hammered away more furiously than ever.

"My 'at!" murmured Ransome to Mr. Spooner. "It's a bull at a gate biznus now. He can't touch our man!"

And Mr. Spooner nodded and chuckled. The Chicken slackened down at last in sheer exhaustion, as his rain of blows proved to have no effect upon the boy before him.

Redfern had given way hardly a foot of ground. There was no driving him round the ring this time; and the harder his foe came at him, the more keen he seemed to become, the more steady and cool.

The onlookers were silent now. They realised that they had misjudged Cunliffe's man, and some of them realised still more keenly that they had been a little hasty in laying reckless bets upon the Chicken. Still, they were far from losing confidence. The schoolboy was putting up an unexpectedly tough fight, but he could never pull it off.

That was the general opinion. But as the Chicken slackened, Redfern was seen to change his game in a flash so quickly that the eye could scarcely follow him.

He had been on the defence all the time. Now, like lightning, he was attacking; and, wonder of wonders, the Chicken was giving ground before him!

Redfern's blows came in thick and fast, and the astonished Chicken guarded them very weakly.

Redfern's right landed on his chin, and his left on the Chicken's brawny chest; then the right again on the side of the jaw as the Chicken swung half-round.

The Chicken simply staggered. Ransome's eyes were blazing now. He shouted aloud in his excitement.

"Go it! Right on the mark, kid!"

But Redfern had no chance yet at the "mark."

He drove in another left-hander, and the Chicken swayed back right to the ropes, and feebly defended himself against a hot attack. The spectators were hushed. Was the Chicken going down—down before the attack of this youngster?

It was incredible, but it was happening. The Chicken seemed nowhere. Redfern's right was drawn back. In another second the Chicken would have been swept off his feet by a tremendous upper-cut he could not guard.

Knock, knock, knock!

It was a furious knocking at the door of the shed. Redfern started back, and the opportunity was lost. The Chicken dropped his hands in astonishment. The fight stopped of its own accord.

The pugilists and the crowd looked at one another in consternation. Mr. Cunliffe turned pale.

Knock, knock, knock!

(Another enthralling long instalment next week.)