

COMPLETE FOOTBALL STORY BY SIDNEY DREW.

The Boys' Realm 19

of Sport & Adventure.

"CAPTAIN JACK"



THE WARM BATH!

A STIRRING STORY
OF LEAGUE FOOTBALL
By A.S. HARDY.





REDFERN MINOR.

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

Skelton was in a cruel uncertainty. He knew too little of what had happened to be able to act. He was as likely to injure Reddy as to help him if he opened his mouth.

While poor Skelton was trying to think out a course to follow, Redfern went on with the captain of St. Dolly's to the Head's study.

He had seen a light burning in the Head's window as they crossed the quadrangle, and he knew that Dr. Cranston was there.

Redfern remembered his last interview with the Head in that dreaded apartment. He had escaped that time. He was not to escape now. He knew that. He had been caught fairly in the act—not doing anything that he thought to be wrong, certainly, but breaking the school laws in the most flagrant manner for another's sake; but he could not say so, and if he did say so it would not help him much, probably.

Already, in his mind's eye, he saw the doctor's grim face, and heard the sentence from his lips.

Well, he had risked it for Arthur, and he could face the music. Hardest of all to bear was the thought that he had made the sacrifice for nothing—that the twenty pounds which would have saved Arthur had not come to him, after all.

He had won the purse, and had not received it. He might extract the money from them afterwards in time for Arthur, but—

Lunsford tapped at the Head's door. A thrill like the contact of ice ran through the veins of Redfern minor.

"Come in!"

The Head's voice seemed deeper, more solemn and stern, than Redfern had ever known it to be before. It was but fancy, but it sounded in his ears like a knell.

They entered. Dr. Cranston was seated at his writing-table, a pen in his hand. He looked at Lunsford, and then at Redfern minor, and quietly laid down his pen, and turned a little in his seat. He knew at once that something serious had happened.

"What is it, Lunsford?" he asked quietly.

"A very unpleasant matter, sir, which I felt bound to bring to your notice at once," said Lunsford. "It's quite beyond me to deal with it. I—I'm almost ashamed to tell you, but

He paused uncomfortably.

"Go on, Lunsford! Is it Redfern minor in trouble again?"

"Yes, sir."

"I am sorry for this, Redfern. I had hoped that your narrow escape would be a warning to you. I had hoped that you would try to lead a straighter life for your brother's sake, after he had saved you from expulsion."

Redfern kept his eyes upon the carpet. For his brother's sake! He could not tell the Head of St. Dorothy's what he had done for his brother's sake.

"Go on, Lunsford!"

"You remember, sir, that you directed me to keep my eye on Cunliffe's place in Wyndale, since it was discovered that St. Dolly's fellows went there?"

"Yes, and I directed you to report to me at once if you discovered that any person belonging to St. Dorothy's visited the place," said the Head. "It was a great shock to me to find that anything of the sort was going on in the school under my charge, and I am determined to stamp it out. This is a case where masters and prefects and all right-thinking boys are at one."

"Yes, sir," Lunsford hesitated. "Redfern minor was missing from calling-over. Mr. Ford was informed that he had a pass to go to the village; but, in view of—of Redfern's late conduct, I thought I had better look into the matter."

"Quite right."

"I inquired among the prefects, and could not find who had given Redfern a pass. One prefect was absent, and I could not ask him. I decided to walk down to the Green Man, and see whether Redfern minor was there."

"Very right."

"I could not help suspecting that he was there, especially as—as the only prefect who could have given him a pass was his major, who was the only one likely to give it him without very close inquiry as to what he intended to do."

"I understand."

"I met Redfern major in the lane, coming from the direction of Wyndale—"

Redfern minor started. Had his brother been at Wyndale that evening? Did Arthur know, then, of the prize-fight at Mr. Cunliffe's?

The Head observed his start, and his eyes glimmered behind his pince-nez for a moment.

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ARE:

SIDNEY REDFERN, a bright, fun-loving lad, who is a new pupil at St. Dorothy's School.

ARTHUR REDFERN, Sidney's elder brother, 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 of St. Dorothy's.

TARRY 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. Sidney Redfern allies himself to the Classics, to the rage and humiliation of the Moderns.

Ransome and Arthur Redfern have got themselves into difficulties with a bookmaker named Cunliffe, who threatens to report them to the head-master unless they pay him the money they owe him.

Sidney learns of Ransome's true character, and resolves to lag for him. The Sixth-Former informs the boy that his elder brother is heavily in debt to Cunliffe, and that unless Arthur can scrape together twenty pounds with which to pay the bookmaker, Cunliffe will report him to the Head. This would, of course, mean the expulsion of Redfern major.

Ransome knows Sidney to be a clever little boxer, and offers to show him a way by which he can earn twenty pounds, and save his brother.

Ransome's plan is that Sidney shall participate in a boxing contest for a purse of money. Sidney at first refuses scornfully, but then it occurs to him that Arthur must be saved at any cost; so he falls in with Ransome's plan.

The following night the Sixth-Former and Sidney make their way down to the Green Man, Cunliffe's public-house, where the boxing match is to take place.

Sidney gets badly knocked about in the first couple of rounds, but in the end he manages to defeat the Chicken. No sooner, however, has the fight been decided than there comes a knock at the door, and Lunsford, the captain of St. Dolly's, steps in. Redfern minor is caught red-handed!

"Come along with me, you young fool," says Lunsford sternly; "I'm going to take you before the Head!"

(Now read this week's instalment.)

Sacked!

REDDY! Skelton and Brown uttered the name together, in blank dismay, as Lunsford and Redfern minor entered the schoolhouse at St. Dolly's.

Redfern's eyes were on the ground. He did not look up. He was walking like one in a dream.

Skelton tapped him on the shoulder, and then he looked round with a start.

"Reddy, what's the matter? What—"

"Stand aside, Skelton!" said Lunsford sharply.

"Oh, all right. I only want to speak to Redfern."

"Get back!"

There was an unusual sharpness in the captain's tones. Skelton stepped back in wonder. Lunsford strode on with Redfern minor, who had not spoken a word. Skelton and Brown looked at each other in great disquiet.

"Something's jolly wrong!" said Brown III.

Skelton knitted his brows.

"They've caught him, Browney!" he said gloomily. "I don't know what it was he was mixed up in with Ransome, but he's been caught at it. I wonder if Ransome's caught, too?"

"Not much!" said Brown bitterly. "Trust Ransome! He wouldn't be caught. Reddy will take the blame for the whole bizny."

"He jolly well won't!" said Skelton between his teeth. "Whatever it was, Ransome led him into it. Ransome can face the music as well."

"He won't!"

"He may be made to."

Skelton tried to think it out with knitted brows. What was it Redfern had left the school for that evening? What wretched business had Ransome dragged him into? Arthur, too, had followed him to interfere, yet nothing had come of it. What did it all mean, and what was the best thing for Reddy's chums to do?



Ransome struggled furiously, but the juniors had the advantage. They rolled him over mercilessly, and they bumped him again and again, the cad of the Sixth all the time struggling and yelling.

"Go on, Lunsford!"

"I asked Redfern major whether he had given his minor a pass, and he said he had. I asked him if he knew where the boy was, and—"

"Go on!"

"He looked so distressed, sir, that I asked him nothing further, but went straight on to the Green Man myself. I thought it hard on Redfern major that he should be forced to say anything against his brother, and I wanted, if possible, to leave him out of the whole matter—if you approve, sir."

"Dr. Cranston nodded.

"Quite right, Lunsford. Redfern major shall not be asked to say anything in the matter. He will not appear in it at all."

Lunsford drew a deep breath.

"I am glad of that, sir. It would be hard on him. Well, I went straight to the Green Man, and found Redfern minor there. He had been engaged in a prize-fight—"

"A—a—what?"

"A prize-fight with a fellow put up by Mr. Cunliffe to meet him for a purse of twenty pounds, as far as I could make out. He claimed the money, but I did not allow him to take it."

"Is this possible, Redfern?"

Redfern's eyes were still on the carpet.

"Yes, sir."

His voice was low, quiet, mechanical—more like the tones of some machine cunningly contrived to imitate the human voice than like the voice of a living being. He was crushed—almost stunned.

Lunsford's matter-of-fact report of what he had discovered at the Green Man stripped the whole affair of any guise of chivalry. He realised how brutal, how sordid, it must appear to the Head, for it appeared so to him now.

"You fought with a low ruffian—"

"He was a decent enough chap, sir."

"H'm! Perhaps so. But you fought with a man, then, for money—for a purse of twenty pounds?"

"Yes, sir."

"I am glad to find you so truthful, Redfern," said the Head, after a pause; "although, certainly, falsehood would not help you now. Why did you do this?"

"I—I wanted the money, sir!"

"You wanted twenty pounds! What could you possibly want such a sum of money for?"

Redfern was silent.

"The only possible explanation, Redfern, is that you owed money—that you are in debt—that you spoke falsely when you told me that you had never betted or gambled at that place," said the Head sternly.

The junior did not speak.

"Answer me, Redfern! Did you require this money to pay a debt?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"That is enough. Have you anything more to tell me, Lunsford?"

"No, sir."

"You have done your duty. Redfern minor, I will not attempt to express the horror and contempt I feel for your conduct. Under a guise of frankness, you have concealed a nature that I hope the worst boy at St. Dorothy's would despise if he knew it as it has now been revealed."

Redfern winced.

His lips were white, but no word passed them. He would not, and could not, defend himself. What was he to say?

"I shall remove this canker from St. Dorothy's before it has had time to spread corruption, I hope," said the Head. "Redfern minor, I would expel you, with every sign of ignominy, before an assembly of the whole school, but for one consideration. I cannot help thinking of your brother—he whose honourable name you have dragged in the mire."

The junior was grimly silent.

"I will not disgrace Arthur, Redfern. It shall not be said of him that his minor was expelled from the school in shame and disgrace. He has had enough to bear, I do not doubt, already on your account. I shall save him all I can. You must leave St. Dorothy's! But for Arthur Redfern's sake you shall go quietly, and this matter shall not be made public. I shall explain to your parents, as in duty bound, why you are sent home; that is all. You will pack your box to-night, and leave the school by the first train in the morning!"

Redfern shivered.

"Yes, sir."

The doctor looked at him long and hard. "I might have hoped to see a sign of repentance in you, Redfern minor. Are you not sorry for what you have done? Do you not regret bringing this shadow upon an honourable name?"

Redfern's lips were closed.

"Well, go!" said the Head. "I won't speak to you further. You are hardened—more hardened than I should have imagined possible in one so young, if I had not seen it with my own eyes. You may go!"

Redfern staggered rather than walked to the door.

He hardly knew how he got out of the study. He went along the passage like one in a dream; he found his way up to the dormitory without seeing where he was going. The great room was dark and empty—dark, save for a glimmer of starlight in at the high windows. It was not yet the bedtime of the juniors.

He was to pack his box that night, to leave.

