

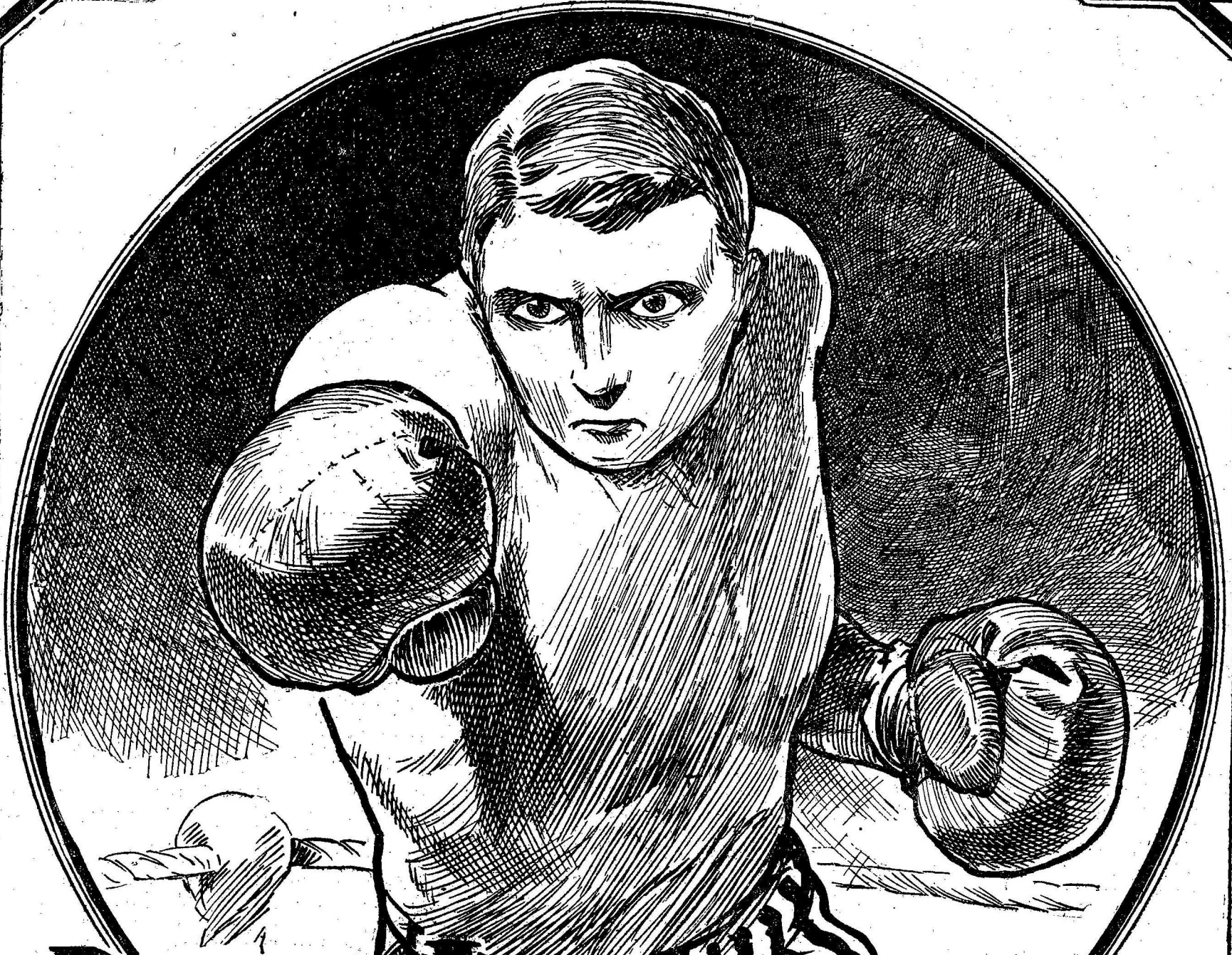
"NIGGER'S VICTORY," A TALE OF SCHOOL FOOTBALL.

(See Inside.)

The Boys' Realm 19

of Sport & Adventure.

THE GREAT SATURDAY ATHLETIC PAPER.



PETER JACKSON
OF MANCHESTER

GRAND NEW BOXING STORY!



ARTHUR REDFERN'S VOW.

A Rollicking New School Tale by Popular CHARLES HAMILTON.

Moderns in the cheering crowd. Many of them had voted for the Modern candidate from a sense of loyalty to their own side, but showed very plainly now that they were not dissatisfied with the result of the election.

Round the quad, went the procession, with a hubbub that rang and echoed in every corner of St. Dolly's. It brought Dr. Cranston to his window, and he looked out and saw the excited crowd in the light of the stars, and smiled. The Head, too, was pleased by the result of the election. For, weak as Arthur Redfern's character had been in the past, the Head knew that at the present moment there was no fellow at St. Dolly's more fit to be captain of the school.

Right round the quad, and back to the School House door, the triumphant Classics bore and there, at last, yielding to their hero, and there, at last, yielding to his entreaties, they set him down. He alighted on the steps, considerably ruffled and rumpled and out of breath.

"Speech—speech!" roared the juniors.

Arthur Redfern laughed. "Very well," he said, "I'll say a few words."

"Order!" yelled Redfern minor.

"Rats!" yelled back Taffy.

There was a roar at once.

"Order!"

"Throw that Modern waster out!"

"Yah! Rats!"

"Chuck him out!"

Order was restored at last. The fellows stood in a great crowd round the steps of the School House, with Arthur standing on the steps and facing them.

"I haven't much to say, you fellows—"

"Hear, hear!"

"I'm jolly glad I've been elected captain of St. Dolly's—"

"Hurray!"

"And I intend to be as decent a captain as I can. I'm a Classical. (Frenzied cheers from the Classics greeted this.) But I'm going to hold the balance level between the two sides. A fair field, and no favour, for all. (A considerable modification of Classical enthusiasm, and cheers from the Moderns.) In the matter of sports especially, a man will be chosen for his form, and without regard to the side he happens to belong to. I hope this term to see St. Dolly's go ahead in football."

"Hurray!"

"We're all going to pull together for that purpose, Modern and Classical."

"Hear, hear!"

"And there's one other matter," said Arthur, after an imperceptible pause. "I allude to some practices that go on, especially in the Upper Forms, which won't bring credit on any school. There's nothing manly or clever in smoking cigarettes in the studies, or making bets with blackguards in public-houses. I'm not going into particulars; but I want it under-

stood that while I'm captain of St. Dolly's I set my face against everything of that sort."

Loud cheers.

"That's all, except that I thank the school for electing me."

And Arthur walked into the house, leaving the crowd cheering loudly. After that most of the seniors went in; but the enthusiasm of the juniors was not so easily dissipated. They wanted some more excitement. Skelton sprang upon the steps.

"Gentlemen—"

"Hear, hear!"

"We're all glad to see old Redfern elected captain of St. Dolly's. The Fourth Form have had a jolly big hand in it. I may say that I've had a big hand in it—"

"Yes, you've got rather a paw," said a voice from the crowd, and there was a laugh.

Skelton turned red.

"If the Modern worm who spoke will kindly step out, I'll make mincemeat of him before I go on," he remarked.

The Modern worm did not accept the invitation, and Skelton continued victoriously:

"I've had a big hand in it, but Redfern minor takes the biscuit. He brought up Fatty Spratt at the last moment to turn the scale. Reddy minor did the trick; and now they've shouldered Reddy major, let's shoulder Reddy minor."

"Bravo!"

"Oh, chuck it!" exclaimed Sidney, as his jubilant Form-fellows closed round him and grasped him. "Nuff's as good as a feast. Chuck it!"

"Rats! Up with you!"

"Lemme alone!"

"Bosh!"

"Up with him!"

And Redfern minor, willy-nilly, was hoisted upon the shoulders of Skelton and Brown and Benson, and, with a crowd of cheering juniors, was marched round the quad.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Taffy. "This is a little too thick! There's been enough of Classical processioning for one evening."

"Just what I was going to say," remarked Rake.

"Let's muck it up, chappies," suggested Vernon.

"Call the fellows together."

"Just what I was going to—"

"Come on!" shouted Taffy, waving his cap.

"Down with the Classics! Sock it to them!"

And the Moderns, nothing loth, made a wild rush at the Classical procession.

"Look out!" shrieked Benson.

"Keep off, you wasters!"

"Hurrah! Sock it to them!"

The procession was burst up in a twinkling. Redfern minor reeled and swayed in the air as his supporters went swaying and staggering. He came down with a bump finally, on his hands and knees, and yelled expressively.

Two or three Classics rolled over him, and squashed him to the ground, and Moderns rolled on them, and in a few minutes there were quite a heap of them, struggling and fighting.

"Go for 'em!" yelled Taffy.

Redfern minor struggled out of the heap.

"Yah! Down with the Classics!"

"Line up!" roared Redfern.

"Sock it to them!"

"Stop that row!" roared a prefect from the doorway of the School House, brandishing a cane wrathfully at the swaying crowd in the starlight. "Do you want me to come out to you?"

But the juniors were far too excited to hear or heed. Classics and Moderns were fairly at it now. The combat continued amid wild excitement, till two or three prefects sallied out of the house with canes in their hands, and began to lay about them with liberal impartiality.

Then there was a hurried retreat, Classics and Moderns scattering into all sorts of corners, and the fight died away; and the prefects, breathing hard after their exertions, went indoors grinning. Redfern, Skelton, and Brown forgathered in their study, breathless and dusty and dishevelled, but in a contented mood.

"Well, it was fun!" said Redfern minor, caressing a swollen nose. "And my major is captain of St. Dolly's! Hurray!"

"Hurray!" echoed Skelton and Brown; and the whole length of the Fourth-Form passage echoed it, too.

THE 12th CHAPTER. The New Captain.

"BEATEN!"

Knowles, of the Sixth, was pacing to and fro in his study. His face was dark with passion, his eyes glinted under his contracted brows.

He muttered the word over and over again, savagely, spitefully. All the evil in his nature seemed to have been aroused by his defeat in the captain's election.

He had gone straight to his study after his defeat. Two or three friends had looked in to condole with him; but Knowles's look had not encouraged them to enter. He had been left alone in his anger and chagrin.

It was a bitter blow to the Modern senior.

He had fully expected to become captain of St. Dolly; the assistance of Ransome and the renegade Classics seemed to make it a sure thing for him. And the defeat was so narrow, too—a majority of only one for his rival.

Knowles gritted his teeth as he thought of it. There came another tap at the door of his study, and he turned angrily round. The door opened, and Ransome looked in.

"Can I come in?"

"I suppose so, if you like!" said Knowles ungraciously.

Ransome entered and closed the door.

There was an indefinable expression upon his narrow, shrewd face; but it was easy to see that he was as annoyed by Arthur Redfern's victory as Knowles was.

"Well, it's all over," he said.

"Have you come here to tell me that?"

"No," said Ransome quietly, taking no notice of Knowles's evident bad temper. "It was an unlucky business; a majority of one."

"My friends ought to have looked after it better."

"I don't see how; every fellow at St. Dolly's voted, and that's an almost unheard-of thing, too," said Ransome. "It wasn't possible to bring up another voter, was it?"

"The Classics managed it."

"Yes; Redfern minor—always Redfern minor!" said Ransome, between his teeth. "But for him, you would have had a majority of two or three."

"Hang him!"

"With pleasure, if I could. But what I have come to ask you is, are you going to take this quietly?"

Knowles stared at him.

"I suppose so. What else can I do?"

"Well, you could protest against the election, and demand a new one, on the ground of intimidation. There were at least two Classics in the Fourth who would have voted for you if they had had a chance."

Knowles shook his head.

"It's no good. Besides, I've heard that some of the Classics were shut up in a cupboard, or somewhere, and only got out just in time for the voting. It was six of one and half a dozen of the other, and the Head wouldn't take any notice."

Ransome nodded.

"Perhaps you're right."

"But Arthur Redfern sha'n't have the easiest job in the world as captain of St. Dolly!" said Knowles savagely, too angry and exasperated to be careful of what he said. "He will find that the Moderns will have to be reckoned with, although he has got in as captain. He will not ride roughshod over us, I can promise him!"

"It's not easy to buck up against the skipper."

"I shall manage to do it. You will see."

Ransome looked at him, his eyes narrowing to mere slits, a way he had when he was watching anyone intently.

"You mean that?" he said.

"Of course I do!"

"Then I'm with you. I suppose you didn't hear Redfern's speech on the school steps? He is going to begin a crusade—abolition of everything except Sunday-school stories!" said Ransome, with a bitter sneer. "Any fellow found smoking to be hauled before the beaks, so forth. I'm up against it all the time. I've got some friends who are up against it, too. I suppose we can rely on you?"

Knowles nodded without speaking.



Back, back went Vernon and Rake, until they stumbled over the baskets of provisions, and sat down heavily. "Ow!" gasped Rake, as the basket squashed in and he reclined amid tarts and cakes. "Ow!" echoed Vernon.

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ARE:

ARTHUR REDFERN, a Sixth-Formet and a prefect at St. Dolly's School.

SIDNEY REDFERN, or "Redfern minor," Arthur's brother. A bright, fun-loving lad. St. Dolly's is divided into two educational sections—Modern and Classical. Sidney is a Classical, and firm chums with SKELTON and BROWN, of the Fourth. A deadly feud exists between the Classics and the Moderns, the latter being led by

TAFFY MORGAN, VERNON, and RAKE of the Fourth.

RANSOME, a Sixth-Formet. A slacker and a good-for-nothing, who, exercising a strong influence over Arthur Redfern, gets the prefect mixed up with a betting gang. Thanks to his younger brother, Arthur gets clear of this unsavoury crowd, and promises Sidney that he will have nothing further to do with Ransome's shady transactions.

Ransome, resenting this, vows vengeance, and seeks to draw other St. Dollyites under his wing.

The opening of a new term finds the school captainship vacant, and Arthur Redfern and another lad named Knowles are proposed for election. Additional interest is added to the election by the fact that Arthur is a Classical and Knowles a Modern.

Ransome, though a Classical himself, intends voting for Knowles, the Modern candidate, and endeavours to persuade other Classics to do likewise; but with no great success, thanks to Redfern minor and Skelton. The day of the election comes, and despite Ransome's efforts, Arthur Redfern heads the poll, and becomes the new captain of St. Dolly's.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

THE 11th CHAPTER. Election Night.

"HURRAH!"

"Bravo!"

"Hurray—ray—ray!"

So shouted and yelled the Classics as they poured out into the dusky quadrangle after the election. Redfern minor, Skelton, and Brown marched along arm-in-arm, hurrahing at the top of their voices, and the enthusiastic cheering drowned the groans of the Modern juniors. Taffy & Co. were glum and dumb. Their candidate had been defeated, and a Classical was captain of St. Dolly's, and they did not feel like cheering.

"Ray—ray—ray!" roared Skelton. "What price the Moderns now?"

And there was a groan for the Moderns.

"Jolly narrow escape for St. Dolly's," said Brown, with a shake of the head. "Majority of one! If a Modern had got in as captain, I don't know what would have become of the old school."

Redfern minor grinned. He was not so alarmed as Brown for the future of St. Dolly's; but he was exuberantly glad that his major had got in as captain.

"Where's Redfern major?" exclaimed Benson. "We ought to chair him round the quad. We did Lunsford when he was elected captain two terms ago."

"Jolly good wheeze!" exclaimed Redfern minor immediately. "Where is he?"

The idea caught on at once. Fifth and Sixth Formers joined in the rush to find Redfern major to chair him round the quad, in triumph.

Arthur Redfern was caught as he was leaving the hall, and he was surrounded and seized before he knew what was happening.

He struggled in the grasp of his captors. "Here, hold on!" he exclaimed. "What on earth's the matter? What's the little game?"

"A giddy triumph!" exclaimed Courtney, of the Sixth. "You're going round shoulder-high."

"Oh, rot!"

"Rot or not, you're going."

"But, I say—"

"Nuff said. Up with him!"

And Arthur was hoisted up on the shoulders of two sturdy Sixth-Form seniors, whether he liked it or not, and rushed out into the quad.

Round him marched a hurrahing crowd, waving caps, yelling, stamping, clapping hands, and some of the younger members executing war-dances and cake-walks.

Arthur laughed as he was marched on. It was a real triumph, and it pleased him. He was glad, too, to see a good many of the

"Good!" said Ransome, with great satisfaction. "You see, you had such a big minority, that Redfern will never have the authority old Lunsford had. Lunsford was elected by three-quarters of the voters. Redfern has just scraped in. Besides, he's not like Lunsford. I know him; he was my chum for years, till he turned against me. He's as weak as water; he has lately put on the heavy business, but it's all gas. If there's enough pressure brought to bear on him, he'll give in. I know him, I tell you. And if he's to be put in his place, the idea is to make his captaincy no end to a trouble to him; and when he finds it too steep, he'll resign. Then—"

Knowles's eyes flashed. "You think he'll resign?" "Yes; or he may be made to. Then comes your chance, and you'll make a far and away better captain for the school than he does. You've got a cleaner record, if everything were known. The idea is, to buck up against him at every opportunity, and make him sick of the job. As for Redfern minor, you can leave him to me—"

There was a knock at the door, and it opened. Arthur Redfern looked in. His brow darkened a little as he saw Ransome in the study, and he paused.

"I looked in to speak to you, Knowles," he said.

"Speak, then," said Knowles. Arthur looked at Ransome, who declined to take the hint. He put his hands into his pockets and sat on the corner of the table, evidently determined not to leave Redfern and Knowles alone. Arthur compressed his lips.

"Well, it's about the election," he said. "I've just scraped in. There has been a lot of excitement about it, but what I want to say is, that the result needn't make any difference to us. I want to pull with you for the good of the school, and especially in football matters. We've got a good fight ahead of us this season, if we're to keep our place, and any trouble between Modern and Classical would muck up the game. I want to assure you that there will be fair play all round, and I shall consult you on all points in making up the teams, and I hope there will be satisfaction all round."

Arthur spoke cordially, and in spite of himself, Knowles's brow relaxed.

"Well, I suppose I think as much of the good of the school as you do," he said. "I don't want any trouble; and there won't be any, so long as the Moderns get fair play in the sports."

"They will get that." "Very good." Knowles said no more, and Arthur stood silent for a moment. He had come there to have a frank and friendly chat with his defeated rival. Knowles was a good enough fellow at bottom, though vain and jealous, and a chat between the two leaders might have cleared the air very much. But Ransome's presence prevented that.

While Arthur stood hesitating, Ransome drew a cigarette-case out of his pocket and selected a smoke. Arthur did not notice his action for the moment, but, as Ransome struck a match, his eyes turned upon him. Ransome lighted the cigarette.

Arthur's eyes blazed. It was a piece of the most palpable insolence, for a strict rule at St. Dolly's was that there should be no smoking in the studies, and Arthur, as captain of the school, was bound to see that it was observed.

"Stop that, Ransome!" he said sharply. "Feeling your feet already?" said Ransome, with a sneer. "You have been captain about a quarter of an hour, I suppose."

"Never mind how long I have been captain. Throw that smoke away. This is the second time I've tackled you on the same subject. You remember the first, I suppose?"

Ransome coloured with anger. He remembered well enough how helpless he had been in the grasp of Arthur Redfern.

"Mind your own business," he said. "This is Knowles's study. Knowles is a prefect. If he asks me to stop, I will. Are you setting up to teach the prefects their business?"

Arthur reddened with annoyance. Ransome's object was to further widen the breach between him and the Modern prefect, and he saw it clearly. Knowles, too, was already looking angry.

"Hang it all, Redfern," he burst out, "I think you might wait till your authority is a little older before you swagger it about in my study!"

"I didn't mean to do anything of the sort, but Ransome—"

"Let him alone!"

"You don't mean to say that you uphold him in this, Knowles?"

"Why shouldn't I?"

"You are a prefect, you—"

"You never winked at breaking rules when you were a prefect?" asked Ransome, with a sneer. "It seems to me that I remember certain little convivial parties at the Green Man, where there was a St. Dolly's prefect named Redfern."

Arthur turned crimson. "You know how much you had to do with that, if it is true, Ransome," he said. "And it is not to the purpose now. I am captain of St. Dolly's, and I'm going to do my duty."

"You are not going to interfere with a friend of mine in my quarters," said Knowles, taking a step forward.

Ransome stepped back, leaving the two facing one another.

"I don't want a row with you, Knowles," said Arthur slowly.

"Get out of my study, then," said Knowles.

"You came here to hector and interfere. You won't find me standing anything of the sort."

"You are mistaken. I didn't—"

"Well, don't interfere, then. Ransome is here as my friend; let him alone."

Ransome blew out a little cloud of smoke. Arthur's hands were eager to be upon the cad of the Sixth, and he could hardly restrain himself. But Knowles stood between them; and Knowles was evidently prepared to interfere by force.

Arthur hesitated—it was the old hesitation that was a part of his character, and always made his difficulties more difficult.

"Look here, Knowles, you know, you're taking up a rotten position in acting like this!" he said. "It's not fair to me, or to yourself."

Knowles shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't want to air my new authority in a hurry either," said Arthur, biting his lip. "I will pass over the matter for this once—on your account, not on Ransome's. I hope you will think better of it, Knowles."

And he quitted the study abruptly.

Knowles stood with a very dubious expression upon his face, not wholly satisfied with himself.

Ransome chuckled softly.

THE 13th CHAPTER.

Open Foes.

"SOMETHING'S on!" said Redfern minor.

He made that statement in a positive tone, and Skelton and Brown did not dispute it. In fact, they nodded assent at once.

"Taffy & Co. are jolly busy," said Redfern. "They're fagging for Ransome. Ransome's giving some sort of a celebration in his study. Now, what on earth is he celebrating for; when his man has just lost the election?"

Skelton and Brown shook their heads. "Better look into it," said Redfern minor cheerfully. "If Ransome is up to some game, or it's some Modern dodge for scoring off us, we want to see to it. Here comes Taffy & Co. Let's bump them, as a start."

"Jolly good idea!" The three juniors were standing at the door of their study, whence they could see over the staircase into the end of the Sixth-Form passage. Taffy Morgan, Rake, and Vernon were coming along in sight, each of them carrying a basket.

They had just come into the house, and the Classics knew that they had been to the tuckshop, and were bringing in supplies for a feed.

To scuttle down the stairs and dodge into the Sixth-Form passage occupied the Classical juniors only a few seconds.

Taffy & Co., coming on towards Ransome's study, found three sturdy youths in rank across the passage, blocking the way.

The Modern chums halted. They had no choice in the matter.

"Chuck it!" said Taffy. "We're busy. Get out!"

"What's the little game?" said Redfern severely. "What do you mean by going in for feeds and things without asking your uncle?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Taffy. "We're fagging for Ransome. He's standing a feed to some of the Sixth and the Fifth. It's going to be a good show, too. He's celebrating—"

"Celebrating Knowles's licking?" "Oh, rats! Our candidate nearly got in." "A miss is as good as a mile!" said Redfern minor severely.

"We should have had it if you hadn't rolled up Taffy Spratt at the last moment!" said Taffy wrathfully.

"Just what I was going to say!" remarked Rake.

"But we did roll him up!" grinned Redfern. "And we saved the situation. We've saved St. Dolly's from the undying disgrace of having a Modern captain!"

"Oh, go and eat coke! And let us pass!" "Rats!" "Look here," roared Taffy, "if I have to put down this basket, I'll give you the licking of your life, young Redfern!"

"Good! It will be an experience!" Taffy's eyes gleamed with the light of battle. The defeat of the Modern candidate still rankled, and he was not sorry to come to battle with Redfern & Co.

He set the basket down in the passage, and Rake and Vernon did the same.

"Now, wipe them up!" said Taffy.

And the three Moderns rushed forward. Now, it was easy to arrange to wipe up the floor with the Classical chums; but it was not so easy to actually do it. So the Moderns found. The two parties closed with one another in deadly strife, and reeled to and fro, struggling and panting. But instead of the Classics being swept away, they stopped the rush easily, and came on in their turn.

Redfern minor went backwards in Taffy's powerful grip; but Skelton and Brown shoved Rake and Vernon back, on the other hand—and back and back till they stumbled over the baskets they had left on the floor and forgotten in the heat of the conflict.

"Ow!" gasped Rake, as he sat down, with Skelton's weight upon him, on one of the baskets.

There was a terrific squelch. The top of the basket squashed in, and Rake sat amid eggs and tarts and cake.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skelton. "That's rough on the feed!"

"Oh! Ow!" gurgled Vernon, sitting down on another basket, and then rolling over, with Brown III. clinging to him.

There was a sharp exclamation in the passage. Ransome came out of his study, and his face was black as he saw the damage done to his property.

He came quickly along, with his light, quiet tread, and a cricket-stump in his hand. His eyes were gleaming with rage.

Clump! Clump! Redfern minor roared as the cricket-stump came across his back, and he let go Taffy suddenly.

Slash! Slash! "Oh, oh, oh! Scoot, you kids!" "Oh, rather!" gasped Skelton.

Leaving the Modern juniors and the scattered and squashed provisions, the three juniors "scooted" down the passage.

Ransome stared at the wrecked baskets. "You young fools!" he exclaimed, glaring at Taffy & Co. "What do you mean by rowing here, and mucking up the things like this?"

"It wasn't our fault!" said Taffy ruefully, rubbing his nose, which had come into violent contact with Redfern's elbow. "You see—"

"You confounded young rascals!" Taffy's eyes flashed.

"I tell you we couldn't help it, Ransome! We—"

"Take that!" exclaimed Ransome furiously. And he brought down the stump across Taffy's shoulders. "Now get the things in! Where are you going?"

Taffy was marching off down the passage, with a very red face. Rake and Vernon, who always followed their leader, marched after him.

"Come back!" roared Ransome. "Shan't!" "What?"

"If you can't be decent you can fag for yourself!" said Taffy defiantly. "You're not going to lam me with a stump! I won't touch the things!"

"What-ho, chappy!" said Vernon. "Come here! I—"

"I won't!" Ransome dashed after the juniors. They dodged round the corner of the passage and fled at once.

The cad of the Sixth stopped. It was useless to pursue the elusive juniors at that moment, whatever he might do later. He promised Taffy & Co. all sorts of unpleasant things in the future, and returned to the place where the baskets had been wrecked. With a savage brow he set about gathering up the things himself.

From a distance Redfern minor and his chums saw him, and they chuckled. It was amusing to see the bully fagging for himself.

Ransome crammed the articles upset on the floor into the baskets again, leaving, however, a considerable quantity of jam-tarts and butter and eggs adhering to the linoleum.

Ransome carried the things into his study, and slammed them down.

Ransome's study was assuming quite a festive aspect. There was a bright fire burning in the grate, and the table was laid with a white cloth, and nicely set. There were seven chairs in the study, four of them borrowed from along the passage. This showed that Ransome expected six guests—a considerable number for a Sixth Form tea-party. A red and perspiring fag was making toast at the fire. It was Gunter of the Fourth, who had the honour of being admitted as a hanger-on to the Smart Set of St. Dolly's.

Ransome glanced at the clock. "Time the fellows were here!" he growled.

Ransome was not in the habit of entertaining in his study. As a rule he contrived to get a great deal of entertainment from others, but did not shine as a host himself. But on the present occasion he was doing the thing in style. He had his reasons; and that feed in Ransome's study was destined to have its results.

"Hallo! What's that?" It was the sound of a heavy fall, and an angry exclamation in the passage.

Ransome looked out of the doorway. Vane and Fellowes were coming along, and Vane's foot had slipped in the spilt eggs on the linoleum. Vane had skated along about three yards, and then sat down with a bump. Vane was looking now as if he would have liked to massage somebody.

"My hat!" said Fellowes. "There's something on the floor!"

"Ow, I'm hurt!"

"By Jove, I'm sorry!" said Ransome, grinning, in spite of himself. "My beastly fag spilt some eggs there!"

"Ow! I'll squash your fag!" "You're welcome! Gunter, go and clear up that muck in the passage!"

And Gunter went. Vane came limping into the study, with a far from amiable expression. But his face cleared a little as he saw the preparations for the feed.

"Well, this is all right," he remarked. "But I don't know what the idea is, Ransome, old son. You're not celebrating our defeat, I suppose."

"No," said Ransome; "our future victory."

"Oh, I don't see—"

"Knowles is coming."

"Yes, but—"

"You'll see, my boy. Hallo, here's Milward and Allen and Mills."

The fellows came in, and Ransome told Gunter to make the tea. The array on the table was really very attractive, and the piles of buttered toast, keeping warm on the fender, gave forth an appetising smell. The fellows drew their chairs up round the table, but the guest of the evening had not yet arrived. It was some minutes later when Knowles entered the study, and nodded to the fellows there. The Modern prefect did not look very cheerful. He was not feeling cheerful, either.

"Here you are, Knowles, old man!" said Ransome. "Glad you've come! Buck up with that tea, Gunter! Sit down, Knowles!"

Under the influence of general sympathy and admiration, Knowles melted into a better humour. Ransome could be very agreeable when he liked, and he was very tactful now. To fan Knowles's resentment against Arthur Redfern was easy. To hint that Arthur was assuming masterful airs, on the strength of a majority of one at the election, was enough to make the jealous and passionate fellow ready to take exception to any and every action of Redfern's.

The tea passed off with growing cheeriness on Knowles's part, and then Ransome bade Gunter clear the table and get out. Gunter obeyed, carrying off a quantity of tarts and toast, to be devoured in his own den. Then the seniors assumed more easy attitudes, stretching their legs, taking their ease, and chatting freely.

And then Ransome opened a drawer in the table, and took out a packet of cigars and cigarettes. He passed them round, and every fellow except Knowles accepted one.

Knowles looked dubious. As a prefect, he knew very well that he ought to prevent anything of this sort; but it was difficult to start upon his friends; and then there was his desire to take a contrary part to Arthur Redfern's.

"Come, you'll smoke, just for once," said Ransome. "Redfern major isn't likely to look into my study, you know."

Knowles's face flushed at the suggestion that he was afraid of being seen by Redfern major. He reached out, and took a cigarette.

The study was soon cloudy with smoke, and Ransome opened the door wide. Knowles finished his cigarette, and lighted another.

"What the deuce—"

It was Arthur Redfern's voice. As he passed to go to his own study, Arthur could not help seeing what was going on. He stopped, looking in with an expression of unbounded surprise upon his face. Ransome looked at him coolly.

"Do you want anything?" "What do you mean, Ransome?" exclaimed Arthur angrily. "Hanged if you're not growing worse every minute. You know this won't do. Suppose a master came along and saw you, what would the Head say to me?"

"I really don't know."

"Knowles, you ought to know better than this," said Arthur. "Look here, stop it at once! I'm surprised to see a prefect taking part in a thing of this sort. Stop it!"

"Mind your own business!"

Arthur came into the study. His face was growing hard; his eyes glinting. He had been very patient with Knowles, but his patience was reaching its limits.

"Look here, I've had enough of this," he said. "It's got to stop. I suppose Ransome is at the bottom of it all."

"You can let Ransome alone," said Knowles. "You're dealing with me, now. The best thing you can do is to get out, and mind your own affairs."

Arthur's eyes flamed.

"I've yielded a point once, Knowles; it was for the first and last time. This sort of thing is going to stop. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Knowles rose to his feet, trembling with anger and excitement.

"Leave the study!" he said. "Don't be a fool, Knowles!" "Get out!" said Knowles, in a low, concentrated voice. "I give you half a minute; then—"

"Well, then what?" "Then I'll throw you out!" "Knowles, you must be out of your senses, I think. I—"

"Are you going?" "Certainly not! I—"

Knowles strode forward. Arthur pushed him back, and then the last vestige of Knowles's self-restraint gave way. His hand went up like lightning, and a blow from the open palm upon Arthur Redfern's face rang like a pistol-shot. The captain of St. Dolly's uttered a sharp cry, and reeled back towards the door.

(Another stirring, long instalment will appear next week.)

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