

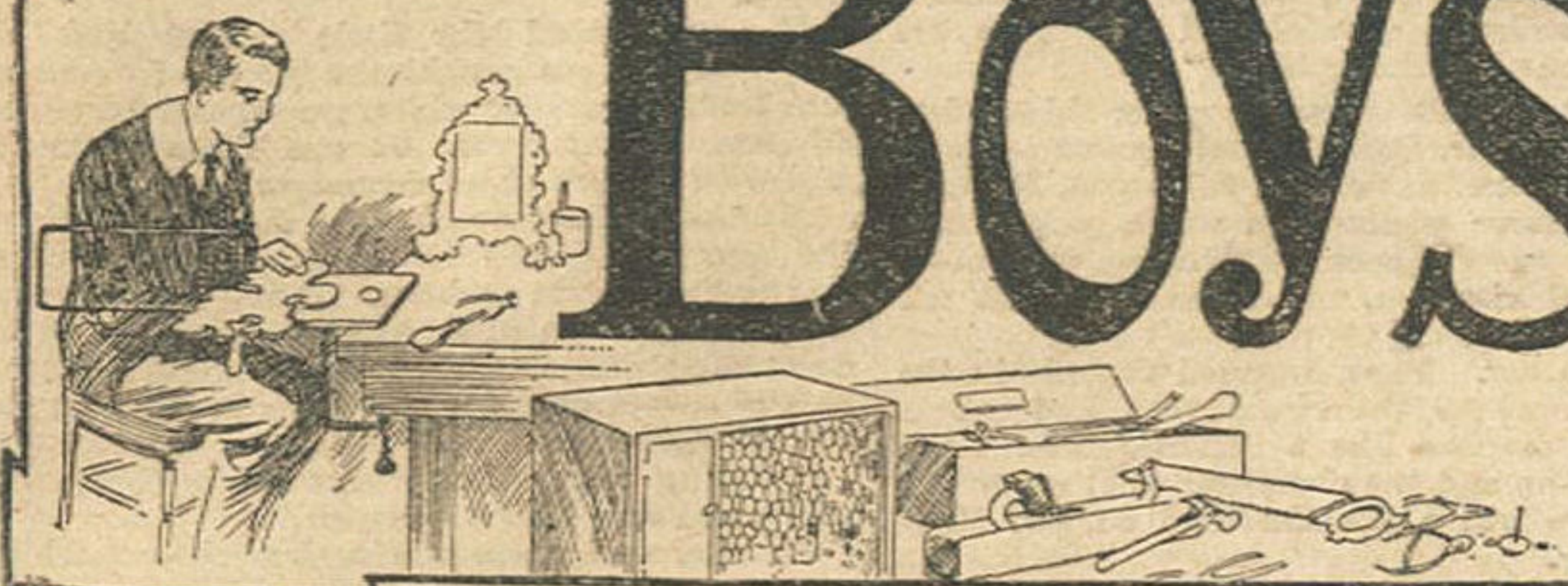
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B.H. 231.

The

Boys' Herald 1^d

EVERY BOY'S AND YOUNG MAN'S
STORY AND HOBBY PAPER.



No. 231, Vol. V.

EVERY WEDNESDAY—ONE PENNY.

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 21, 1907.

SIDNEY DREW'S THRILLING CIRCUS STORY!



Darmio, his face and shirt-front blackened with a mixture of soot and water, had his head out of the little window. He yelled like a Kaffir who had just sat down on a hornets' nest, but the crowd of half-dressed people were too convulsed with mirth to heed him. Water leaked through the floor of the caravan, and ran under the door in an ever-increasing cascade.

Another of the Popular
Cliveden Stories.

The Fourth Form Match

BY FRANK RICHARDS
CHARLES HAMILTON.

You'll enjoy this story of the great football struggle between the Combine and the Old Firm.—YOUR EDITOR.



The 1st Chapter. Settling the Question.

FOOTBALL! What do you know about football, Dick Neville?"

"More than you do, Panky—though that's certainly not saying much."

"Rats! Who muffed a certain goal in the last junior match—"

"I did, because you got in the way like a clumsy ass—"

"Like a what?"

"Like a clumsy ass," said Dick Neville deliberately. "You got in the way, and shoved me off the ball."

"I was charged by a—"

"I don't care what you were charged by, or whether you were charged at all. You ought to have been charged with being stupid and incapable—"

"Look here, Dick Neville—"

"I'm looking; and I can see the biggest ass and the smallest footballer at Cliveden."

Pankhurst pushed back his cuffs. The argument was growing warm in the common-room at Cliveden College. Cliveden Juniors had lately met Redclyffe Juniors in an out match, and instead of a sweeping victory over them, had been lucky to finish with a draw—a result which each member of the junior eleven attributed to the other members, each member being thoroughly convinced he was one of the best footballers ever sent out to uphold the colours of the old school.

The rivals of the Fourth—Pankhurst and Price, known in the Form as the Old Firm, and Neville, Flynn, and Poindexter, equally famous as the Combine, were firmly convinced that they had played up excellently well themselves, but their criticisms of each other's play were plain-spoken, not to say rude.

"I've put up with a lot from those three rotters," said Pankhurst, looking round, and indicating the Combine with a gesture.

"Their very faces worry me, and they muffed the Redclyffe match between them."

"I guess you can put that down to your account," remarked Poindexter. "You got in Neville's way, and—"

"You mean Neville got in my way."

"Neville was on the ball—"

"Neville was playing the giddy ox, and I—"

"You were playing the giddy goat."

"If you're looking for a thick ear, Punt-pusher—"

"I'm looking for all the thick ears either of you two can give me."

Pankhurst had finished pushing back his cuffs. His face had assumed a hue redder than his hair, in his wrath—and his hair was of the richest tint imaginable.

"I've stood a lot from those kids," he said; "I've stood enough. If they came home humble and apologetic after muffing a match, it would be tolerable. But to put the blame on fellows who played up and succeeded in making it a draw at least—well, that takes the biscuit. Are you going to take your jacket off, Dick Neville?"

"Oh, no," said Dick airily, "I can lick you with my jacket on."

"Come on, then."

"I guess I'm on in this scene," said Lincoln G. Poindexter, whipping off his jacket. "Are you ready, Price?"

"Quite so," said Price, Pankhurst's chum, and he squared up to the American.

"Arrah!" exclaimed Micky Flynn. "Hould on intirely! Don't be silly asses, you know, if you can help it. Stop it, I say!"

And Micky Flynn, the peace-maker, rushed in between Pankhurst and Dick Neville, with the result that two blows came home upon him at the same moment—Dick's fist clumping upon his cheek, and Pankhurst's hard knuckles crashing on his neck.

Micky gave a terrific whoop.

"Arrah! Ye silly asses—hould on—"

"What are you getting in the way for?" demanded Pankhurst. "You've hurt my

knuckles, shoving your silly neck in the way."

"Get aside, Micky."

"Sure, and I won't, Dicky. Hould on, I've got a suggestion to make." Micky Flynn rubbed his injured places ruefully. "Ye silly spalpeens, why couldn't ye look where ye were hitting? Hould on, I tell ye. Ye'll have the prefects down upon ye if ye start fighting in the common-room, and you know Grahame is always on the look-out to go for us."

"Waal, that's so," drawled Poindexter, "but the cheek of these kids—"

"Very true," said Pankhurst, "but the cheek of those rotters—"

"Sure, and will ye listen to me? Ye've got no logic. What's the good of punching one another's heads to settle a football question? I've got an idea. You two wrecks think you know how to play footer—"

"Look here, Micky Flynn—"

"We know we saved the Redclyffe match," continued Flynn. "Some of the Form side with you, and some side with us. Well, let's settle the question by getting up a Form match. We'll put up an eleven against any side you can get together, and we'll wipe up the ground with you intirely."

"My hat!" exclaimed Pankhurst, "that's a jolly good idea. But, of course, Neville and Puntbuster won't take it on."

"Won't we?" exclaimed Dick, hotly. "We're on this, and we'll give you—"

"You'll give us an exhibition of how not to play footer—"

"We'll—"

"I guess we'll lick you hollow," said Poindexter. "We'll do our level best, anyway. Micky, old kid, this is the first time I've ever heard you talk hoss-sense."

"Arrah, Puntbuster—"

"It's a go," exclaimed Neville. "We'll fix it for Saturday afternoon, Panky. And if we don't give you a lesson—"

"Rats! You're going to get the lesson. Of all the clumsy bunglers I ever saw on a football field—"

"And of all the asses I ever saw muffing a game—"

"Of all the—"

"Of all the—"

"There's Medway, the musician," Neville

"Not so much noise there, you kids," said a voice of authority, as Crane and Cuffy of the Fifth Form came into the room. "You're always quarrelling, you young rascals. Hold your row."

If anything could unite the warring factions of the Fourth into harmony, it was interference from the Fifth Form. The Combine and the Old Firm forgot their dispute at once, and joined in a yell of defiance at the Fifth Form boys.

"Shut up that row," exclaimed Crane threateningly.

"Rats!" shouted the Fourth. "Get out! What do you want in our room, anyway?"

"We'll come where we like—"

"No, you won't! You'll get out," said Neville, confident in numbers. "Now then, we don't want you here. Clear!"

"If you can put us out—"

"We'll jolly soon do that," exclaimed Neville. "Come on, kids."

"What ho!"

The juniors made a rush. Crane and Cuffy, in spite of all their dignity as full-fledged seniors, were seized and hurled forth into the passage.

The Fourth had to respect the Sixth, especially the prefects, but nothing put their backs up so much as any attempt at control by the Fifth.

The doorway was crammed with grinning faces as Crane and Cuffy picked themselves up. And a loud hooting and cat-calling followed the chiefs of the Fifth, as, feeling that the odds were too great for a tussle, they went disconsolately down the passage.

The 2nd Chapter. Looking for Recruits.

THE Fourth Form at Cliveden was divided. The Combine and the Old Firm equally claimed to be the heads of the Form, and the question had never been satisfactorily settled.

The rivalry between them never ended, and sometimes one party gained an advantage, sometimes the other. Each party had plenty of backers in the Form, and their rows very often made things very lively in the Fourth. The proposed Form match caused a good deal of excitement.

Cliveden was a footballing college. The first eleven, captained by Trevelyan, the captain of the school, had won a great name for itself, and the second eleven played in a good many matches with the juniors of other schools. The second eleven was chosen from the Fifth, the Shell, and the Fourth, and all our old friends belonged to it.

Crane of the Fifth was the captain, though there were a good many youngsters in the Fourth who were fully convinced that they were more fitted for the post.

The Fourth Form Football Club was a flourishing concern. Nearly every boy in the Fourth was a member, and most of them playing members. It was easy enough to get up a twenty-two for a Form match, if that had been all; but the rivals of the Fourth were naturally anxious to secure the best players.

"We shall have Jeffreys and Simpson," Poindexter remarked, in No. 4 Study, the home of the Combine, "that will make five. I'm afraid the other six will be only passable."

"There's Medway, the musician," Neville



They rushed the ball down the field and packed before the goal. King, the goalie, was not equal to an attack like that. Right in came the ball from Pankhurst's foot, and it lodged in the net. "Goal!" shouted the excited spectators.

remarked. "He's been coming on very well in the footer lately."

Poindexter shook his head decidedly.

"We should have to listen to his concertina. You remember the last time we wanted something from him."

"Yes, rather. It was horrid."

"We'll leave him to Panky and Price, if they like to risk the concertina. There's Gatty, though. He wasn't in the second eleven, but he's very good at back, and we want a good back. I don't think Panky has got hold of him. He thinks only of his precious stamp-collecting hobby, and doesn't take any interest in Form rows."

"Sure, and we ought to secure Gatty," exclaimed Flynn. "Let's go and interview him before those bounders get hold of him. They're quite mean enough to try to collar him for their side before we get a chance."

"Ha, ha, ha! Come on then."

The Combine at once made their way to Gatty's study. Gatty was a fervent philatelist, and one of the most active members of the Cliveden Hobby Club. It was really through Neville that he had joined the Form football club, so the Combine had a claim on him.

Gatty was alone in the study, and he looked up from an album as the chums came in.

"Hallo," he said, "I'm rather busy now—"

"Been collecting any more stamps, Gatty?" asked Micky Flynn, with a wink to his chums. "I heard that you've been inquiring for a green Ceylon."

Gatty looked more cordial at once.

"That's so," he replied. "I wanted a green Ceylon—1864, and I've got it at last, to complete my collection. I was in luck."

"You were, darling, and no mistake. Will you show it to us?"

"With pleasure."

Gatty was quite sincere in that. He would have walked a mile to show his stamp album to anybody. He opened it willingly, and the chums looked at the famous green Ceylon with a great deal of interest.

"Splendid," said Neville. "Pity it's got that rotten postmark on it."

The youthful philatelist gave him a withering look.

"That what?" he inquired.

"I mean," explained Neville, who knew nothing about philately, but realised that he had put his foot into it somehow, "I mean, if the postmark were fainter one could see the stamp better—and—"

"That's the best-defined postmark I've got in the book," said Gatty. "No mistaking that."

"Oh yes, of course. That was really what I meant."

"What was?"

"That—that there was no mistaking that for a postmark—I mean that there was no mistaking that postmark for a stamp—that is to say—"

Poindexter trod on Dick's foot in time, or he might have gone on for ever.

"I guess that's a fine specimen," said Poindexter. "It must have taken you a lot of time to get hold of such a jolly good one, Gatty."

"Oh, I watch all the advertisements in the philatelist papers," explained Gatty. "One has to be up to snuff, you know."

"What did it run you into?"

"I got it for five-and-six," said Gatty, with a satisfied smile.

"Jolly clever of you," exclaimed Neville, feeling that he was on sure ground now. "I knew a chap who gave twenty-eight bob for a green Ceylon, 1864."

"You ass!" said Gatty. "A lot you know about stamps. That would be a different green, and not this kind at all."

"Oh," said Neville, quite crestfallen, "I thought—"

"I don't believe you can think," said Gatty. "I can't understand a fellow who doesn't take an interest in stamps. They're an education in themselves."

"Yes, yes, I know they are. They're a classical education—"

Poindexter trod on Dick's foot again.

"I guess that's a good specimen," he remarked.

"Would you mind us looking through the rest of the album, Gatty?"

Would Gatty mind? He was delighted. He took the three chums on a tour through his album. They moved by easy stages from Europe to Asia, from India to China, from Japan to the United States. Gatty, who had the subject at his finger-tips, knew the history of every issue, all about the water-marks and postmarks—all there was to be known, apparently. He was quite willing, and even eager, to spread his knowledge. After a quarter of an hour the interest of the topic somewhat paled. After half an hour it grew to be a terrible bore. But Gatty was not half through the album yet, and he appeared to be wound up like a clock—and an eight-day one at that.

"I say, I forgot that I had to speak to Jeffreys," exclaimed Dick. "Excuse me, old man."

He rushed from the study.

Gatty hardly noticed him go. He was holding forth on the subject of the issue of stamps by certain South American Republics, not for postal use, but as a means of turning an honest penny—much to the distress of collectors.

"Jolly interesting," said Poindexter, after waiting ten minutes for an opening and finding none. He had to interrupt Gatty, but the matter was getting desperate. "Jolly interesting, Gatty. But—"

Gatty did not appear to hear him. He had arrived at Chili by this time, and was talking nineteen to the dozen.

"I guess all that's worth knowing," said Poindexter; "but, as I was saying—"

"You see, in Chili they—"

"Yes, but—"

"In the year 1896, for instance—"

The Fourth Form Match.

(Continued from the previous page.)

"Rotten of them, and no mistake," said Poindexter. "But will you—"

"Sure and I heard somebody calling," exclaimed Micky Flynn, hurriedly; and he bolted out of the study. Not even for the sake of winning the Form match would he have listened further to that terrible philatelic disquisition.

"Oh, you bounders," murmured Poindexter, "I'm in for it."

"What do you think of an issue of two thousand—"

"Mean, I guess. But will you play—"

"And that wasn't so bad as—"

"On Saturday afternoon—"

"You're interrupting me."

"Yes, but—"

"If you don't take an interest in the matter why don't you say so? If you—"

"But I do—"

Gatty closed his book with a snap.

"A fellow like you can't be expected to understand philately," he said. "I've tried to explain the thing to you, but you can't grasp it."

"My dear chap, I—"

"Hullo, there's the bell. I'm off."

And Gatty left the study, leaving Poindexter standing there, the picture of wrath and dismay.

"Off!" muttered Poindexter, "I think you are—off your pecky rocker! There's an hour or more clean thrown away, and my head's buzzing like a bee-hive, and I haven't got the young villain on our side after all."

And Poindexter disconsolately left the study. As he did so voices caught his ears in the passage—Gatty's voice and Pankhurst's.

"Hullo, Gatty, I was looking for you. Will you play back for us in the Form match on Saturday, old fellow?"

"Certainly, Pankhurst, I'd be very pleased."

Poindexter grunted.

The Combine had had all their trouble for nothing, and then Pankhurst had come along and secured the recruit for the Old Firm without the slightest difficulty. It was too bad. Pankhurst grinned at the American chum as he passed him in the corridor, and it required all Lincoln G.'s self-control not to give him a sample of the famous Poindexter left-handers.

The 3rd Chapter.

Tea in No. 4 Study.

"GOOD for you, Pointpusher!" exclaimed Dick Neville, as Poindexter came into No. 4.

"Arrah, and it's a foim bhoys he is, intoirely," said Micky Flynn, smacking Poindexter on the back with a force that almost took his breath away.

"Trust Poindexter to stick it out," said Neville, smacking the American in turn. "Pointpusher for ever! Good old Pointbuster!"

"What the dickens are you driving at?" gasped Poindexter. "Stop that, you pesky idiots, or I guess you'll dislocate my spinal column."

"Sure, we're only showing our admiration—"

"Show it a bit more gently, then. What's the wheeze?"

"Why, your nerve in sticking it out like that," said Neville. "I couldn't stand it. I wonder somebody doesn't slay Gatty. He ought to be slain several times a day. But as you've enlisted him—"

"But I haven't."

Neville and Flynn gave a jump.

"What?"

"Not!"

"Certainly not. He talked me nearly to death, but Pankhurst has got him after all. He plays back for the Pankites."

"My hat!"

"We've lost him," said Poindexter. "I guess it can't be helped; and you were a little too previous with your congratulations."

"Sure and we might have known Pointbanger would make a muck of it, Dicky darling."

"That we might, Micky."

"I guess that's rot. I stuck it out longer than either of you two did."

"We left it to you."

"Sure and we relied on ye, Pointpusher, and ye've failed us in the hour of need. Don't say a word; we forgive you."

"Why, you silly cuckoo—"

"Nuff said. I say, I've asked Greene in here to tea, so put on your sweetest smiles, you two, and do the polite," said Dick Neville. "Greene is the best goalkeeper in the Fourth, and if we get him we shan't do so badly. He wastes a lot of time on his photography humbug, but he keeps goal like a cherub, and we can't spare him. If we rope him in that will make a makeweight for Gatty."

"Good for you, Dick. What about Philpot?"

"Oh, he's a rotter! We don't want him."

"Well, I know he's a cad," said Poindexter thoughtfully. "But since that affair in which we showed him up, he's turned up regularly at footer practice. Trevelyan has made him, and he's improved wonderfully. You see, it isn't as if we had our choice of a lot of good players. Half the team on either side will be very scratch. I've noticed that Philpot has turned out very good in goal, and if we can't get Greene—"

"Sure, and I don't like the idea of playing Philpot," said Micky. "He's such a beastly cad; but then, if he's turnin' over a new leaf, we don't want to be hard on him."

"I guess so."

"Well, we'll see," said Dick Neville. "Philpot is good in goal, I know, and I'm surprised to see

him good at anything; but we shan't want him if we can get Greene. But mum's the word, here comes Greene. Not a syllable about the football, mind, till he's had tea and got into a friendly frame of mind. I dare say Pankhurst and Price have been getting at him already."

Greene put his head into the study. Greene was the amateur photographer of the Cliveden Hobby Club, but he was a very good soccer player as well.

"Hullo, Greene!" said Dick hospitably. "Come in, old fellow. Poke the fire, Micky; that kettle will never boil. Put on the cloth, Poin."

The juniors obeyed. Greene came into the study, and Dick gave him the only armchair Greene looked a little surprised. He was on friendly terms with the Combine, but he had never been made so much of by them before. He thought they were three awfully nice fellows, and had recognised his real merit at last.

"Thanks, Neville. It was decent of you to ask me here to tea."

"Not at all," said Dick heartily. "It's a pleasure to us. How is the photography getting on, Greene, old son?"

"First-rate," said Greene, his face lighting up at the mention of his hobby. "Of course, the light hasn't been good lately, but I've made some really good pictures. I—"

"Kettle's boiling!" announced Micky Flynn.

"Good! I'll make the tea."

Dick reached down the cigar-box which served No. 4 Study for a tea-caddy, and made a sign to Micky to take up the subject of photography. Flynn knew rather less about photography than about Sanskrit, but he was always willing to oblige.

"Sure and I'd like to see some of the pictures!" he exclaimed. "It's a clever bounder ye are, Greene. I was thinking of taking up photography."

"Good idea," said Greene. "I'll show you how to do it. And I'll tell you what, Flynn, I'll sell you my old camera for fifteen-and-six. It cost me a guinea."

Flynn made a wry face.

"Sure, I don't know—"

"It's as easy as anything. I'm giving it up because I'm going in for films now. I use films on my new camera, though I've a fine lot of plates—"

"Sure, and it's short of plates we are in this study," said Flynn. "How ever many we get, they're always getting broken. Poindexter settles two at least every day playing diablo. If you've got plates to dispose of—"

"I mean photographic plates, not dinner plates!" said Greene witheringly. "As I said, I've films in my new camera."

"Have you really?" said Micky sympathetically. "Can't you get 'em out?"

"Eh?"

"Can't you wipe 'em off?" said Micky, apparently under the impression that a film in a camera was like a film on a pane of glass. "If you used soda—"

"What's he talking about?" asked Greene, looking round in wonder. "Is he off his giddy rocker?"

"I guess he is," said Poindexter hastily. "Don't mind him. I say, tea's ready. Don't move, Greene; make yourself comfy, and we'll shove the table towards you. Lend me a hand, Flynn."

Poindexter and Flynn took hold of the table to slide it a little towards the armchair in which sat the honoured guest. Unfortunately there was a hole in the extremely worn square of carpet which adorned the study, and the leg of the table caught in it.

"You're very kind," said Greene. "I—"

"Ow!"

The "ow" broke from him as the table jerked, and a cup of hot tea was projected against his chest. He jumped up as if moved by electricity.

"Ow! You silly ass! Ow!"

"You lunatic, Flynn!"

"You howling ass, Poindexter!"

"You did it!"

"Sure, and it was you intoirely!"

Greene wiped his soaked waistcoat with a handkerchief. The three chums rushed to his aid at once. If Greene were to depart in dudgeon all would be lost, and Dick Neville had expended a considerable amount of their combined pocket-money on that feed. Greene was not looking pleased, and no wonder, for the hot tea had soaked through waistcoat and shirt, and slightly scalded him. But the profuse apologies of the chums, and their evident anxiety to appease him, mollified Greene. He sat down again.

"It's all right," he said. "Don't mention it. I say, this is a ripping spread."

His eye passed admiringly over the table.

It was, indeed, a very good spread. Jam and cake were there in addition to the usual fare, and jelly, cream puffs, and a pile of tarts.

"Oh, of course we did our best as you were coming," said Poindexter.

"Did you?" said Greene rather wonderingly.

"That was very nice of you. Yes, I'll start with the sardines, please."

Greene started with the sardines. He continued with the ham and pickles. He went on with the eggs and muffins. He certainly made a good tea, as the chums hospitably urged him to do. Dick Neville poured out his fourth cup of tea as he started on the cake.

"I say, this is prime," said Greene.

"Glad you like it," said Poindexter. "I guess we'll try and do better next time. Of course, you'll come again, Greene?"

"Certainly," said Greene, beaming. "When you do a fellow down in this style, he doesn't want pressing to come again, I should think. I'll come pretty often."

"That's nice of you, Greene. We want you, you know. Don't stand on ceremony. Just come in when you like."

"I will. Yes, I'll have some jam tarts now,

Flynn. May as well put three or four on my plate and save passing again."

"Certainly. Here you are, mavourneen. Do you like them?"

"Like them? I should say so. What are the cream puffs like?"

"Ripping!" said Neville; "and we got them specially for you. I heard you say that you liked cream puffs the other day."

"Really, I say, you're awfully kind," said Greene, quite overpowered.

"Not at all. Don't spare them, you know."

Greene did not spare them. He was beginning to look extremely well fed, while the chums, who were spending most of their time in attending to his wants, hardly had a look in. A feed in No. 4 Study, which was famous for its feeds, had seldom been done such justice to by a single guest. Greene acquitted himself like a man and a Briton.

"Prime," he said—"I can only say prime! No, nothing more, Flynn, thank you. Well, perhaps I could manage one more cream puff, if you insist. No, no more tea, Neville—well, yes, half a cup, if you like. This is ripping, and I don't know how to thank you fellows."

"Oh, come in again, that's all," said Neville.

"That I will, Neville; and you can bet I won't forget. Not till after Saturday, though," added Greene, with a laugh.

"Why? What do you mean? Why not?"

"The footer, you know. This stuff is ripping tommy, but pastry won't do a fellow much good before a football match."

The chums exchanged glances. They had been thinking that it was about time to bring the conversation round to the topic of the Form match on Saturday, and here was Greene referring all of his own accord to that very topic. Nothing could have been more fortunate.

"So you're thinking of playing in the Form match?" said Neville carelessly.

"Oh, yes, rather!"

"Well," said Dick Neville, looking round for confirmation, "I don't know a chap in the Fourth Form that keeps goal like Greene does."

"I guess that's so."

"Sure, and it's a marvel he is between the sticks, and no mistake!"

"Oh, you're flattering me," said Greene, looking very pleased, nevertheless.

"Not a bit of it."

"I guess it's the solid truth."

"Well, I admit that I can keep goal," said Greene. "I don't want to brag, you know, but a shot has to be a pretty good one to pass me. I don't know about being the best goalkeeper in the Fourth, though."

"You are, Greene. No doubt about that."

"Well, Pankhurst said so, too, when—"

"He did, did he?"

"Yes, when he asked me to play for him on Saturday," said Green innocently.

For a moment a pin might have been heard to fall in No. 4 Study.

"When he what?" asked Poindexter at last, in a hollow voice.

"When he asked me to play for him on Saturday."

"You refused?"

"Oh, no; I accepted."

Greene drained his teacup and rose to his feet. "Well, you chaps, I must fly, or I shall be late for prep," he said. "Thanks awfully! You've treated me jolly well. I'll look in again on Saturday after the match, if you like."

"Oh, do," said Neville, in a faint voice. Poindexter and Flynn sat staring at Greene in a stony, sphinx-like way, incapable of words.

"And I say, Flynn, I'll send that camera in, and you can look at it, and if you're inclined to take up photography—"

"Arrah! You—you—you impostor—"

"Eh? I say I'll send in the camera—"

"If you do I'll jump on it."

Greene stared at Micky Flynn as if he thought he had gone suddenly mad. Perhaps a glimmering of the facts dawned upon his mind then, for he grinned slightly, and walked out of the study. Micky Flynn laid his hand on the teapot, as if to send it after him.

Poindexter stopped him.

"Done!" said Neville and Flynn together mournfully.

"Spooed!" said Poindexter. "I guess Panky and Price are getting the best of this deal. We shall have to get Philpot to keep goal for us."

The 4th Chapter.

The Day Before the Match.

SCRATCH, scratch, went the pens.

The table was cleared in No. 4 Study, and the chums were at work. Work had to be done, whatever the state of affairs might be in the internal politics of the Fourth Form. The Combine were busy, so busy that they did not hear a tap on the door till it was repeated.

"Oh, come in!" grunted Poindexter.

The door opened, and a sallow-faced youth entered. It was Philpot of the Fourth, known in the Form as "Shylock." He was upon the worst of terms with No. 4 Study. Philpot was of a financial turn of mind, and he had lately improved the shining hour by lending money at interest among the Lower Form boys at Cliveden, a practice which had been stopped by the Combine, who had had to resort to rather rough measures for the purpose.

"Hullo!" said Neville, looking rather grimly at the youthful usurer. "What may you happen to want, Philpot?"

"I want to speak to you about the footer, Neville."

The Combine exchanged glances. Philpot was a cad, but he certainly could keep goal when he liked to try. If he was turning over a new leaf, and trying to live up to the sporting traditions of Cliveden, it was only fair to help him on. And

the Combine certainly wanted a goal-keeper, as they had lost Greene to the enemy.

"Oh, all right!" said Neville. "Do you want to play for us?"

"Yes, if you would like me to."

"We'll take you," said Dick. "But mind, it will mean sticking to the practice hard up to Saturday. It's no joke, you know."

"I know that, Neville. I used to play football a couple of terms ago, and now I've taken it up in earnest it's all coming back. I am going to try to get into the Cliveden second eleven if I have a chance."

"There's always a chance for a good player," said Dick, looking at him keenly. "But are you in earnest? You're the last chap I should have expected to turn out a footballer?"

"You've seen how I'm sticking to it."

"Yes, I admit that. We shall be glad to have you on Saturday, and we're obliged for the offer. There have been some rubs between us, but we're quite willing to forget all about them if you are."

"I'm glad of that, Neville. That's all I wanted to say, so I won't bother you as you're busy."

And Philpot left the study and closed the door. The chums were certainly busy, but instead of resuming his work, Dick Neville sat leaning his chin thoughtfully on his hand, in an attitude of deep reflection.

"Two cents for your thoughts," said Poindexter, looking up curiously.

Dick laughed.

"I was thinking about Philpot," he said. "I don't believe he's reformed. It seems a rotten thing to think of any fellow, but I can't help the idea coming into my mind that he has some beastly mean motive for joining in the match. If he gets into the second eleven, he—well, I don't know what his game is, but I don't believe in him."

"Well, I guess I don't, either, if it comes to that," said Poindexter thoughtfully. "But he's not in the second eleven, and very likely won't ever be. As for his playing for us on Saturday—"

"He doesn't like us. Why should he offer?"

"I guess it's because he likes the game after all."

Dick shook his head.

"He was always such a mean beast that I can't trust him, even when he seems to be acting above board," he said. "Still, I must say I can't see how he can have any axe to grind in playing for us to-morrow. Of course, it will be good practice for him if he's really trying to get into the second eleven. If he plays up well, I shall have a better opinion of him, perhaps."

And the chums fell to their work again. Dick's distrust of the Shylock of the Fourth Form was to some extent shared by the others. Philpot was not a fellow to inspire confidence. Still, a goalkeeper they must have, and Philpot's offer was too good to be refused.

Pankhurst and Price had certainly had the best of the recruiting. While the Combine were at work, the Old Firm were sitting in their study comparing notes.

"We've got the best lot in the Fourth Form," Pankhurst said positively. "Gatty is the best back, and Greene the best goalie. Medway is good as outside. Myers at centre-half will be all right. The rest are rather a scratch lot, I know; but then they're as good as any that No. 4 Study can show. Besides the three themselves, Neville's team will be very scratch. Jeffreys is the best."

"Quite so," said Price, his usual remark. "Only—between ourselves, you know—there's no denying that Poindexter, Neville, and Flynn are three of the best, and quite up to our own form."

Pankhurst nodded.

"Yes, I know that, Price. But three don't make up a team. Mind you, I know it will be a tussle. But I really think we've got the best lot, and that we shall knock spots off No. 4 Study on Saturday afternoon."

"Oh, no doubt about that!" said Price confidently.

Pankhurst and Price looked forward to Saturday with great eagerness. The Combine appeared to do so also. The most complete confidence was shown on both sides. When the teams were complete, every leisure moment, almost, was spent upon the football field at hard practice. And Dick Neville, in spite of his dislike of Philpot, had to admit that the cad of the Fourth did very well in goal.

Pankhurst and Price noticed it too. The Combine put in some practice on Friday, and the Old Firm stood and looked on, to see how they were shaping. The Combine in turn shot for the goal which Philpot was defending, and Shylock sent every ball back. It was some time before Poindexter, with a very skilful shot, baffled him, and sent the leather through the posts.

Pankhurst looked very serious.

"I say, that chap shapes well," he remarked to his chum. "I never looked for it in him. They say he's trying to get into the second eleven as goal-keeper, and I shouldn't wonder if he does, if he keeps on like that. You see, the Combine are weakest in defence, but if they have a man between the posts who never lets a ball pass him, they're all right."

Price nodded.

"Look at the beasts grinning at us!" said Pankhurst. "Come away!"

"I say, how do you like that, Panky?" called out Dick Neville. "Think your goalie is up to the mark?"

"Oh, rats!" said Pankhurst. "That chap can stop your shots all right, but I should make pretty short work of him, I think."

"Come and try," said Philpot.

"Oh, I'm not in my things—"

"Rats! You know you couldn't do it."

The challenge could not be refused. Pankhurst, colouring angrily, ran on the field. He dribbled the ball down to the goal, and feinted, and then, suddenly changing his feet, sent in a low, sudden shot that would have beaten many a good goalie. But Philpot's foot met it, and it came bounding out.

Pankhurst tried again and again, but the result each time was the same. He affected to believe that it was due to his being in his clothes and walking boots, but as he gave it up, and walked away with Price, his face was very grave.

"We sha'n't find it easy to pass that chap," he said. "If he keeps goal like that to-morrow, Pricey, we shall have a hard fight for it."

"Looks like it."
"Fancy Philly turning out like that, too!" said Pankhurst thoughtfully. "There's not much of the sportsman about him. I wonder what mean motive he had for joining the Combine?"

Which showed that Pankhurst had a distrust for Philpot equal to Dick Neville's.

"Hallo, Panky!" said Greene, meeting the red-haired chums. "I hear that Neville's goalkeeper has been staggering humanity lately."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Pankhurst. "He's not up to your form if you put up your best game, Greeney."

"You think we shall win, then?"

"Oh, yes!" said Pankhurst confidently.

"What do you think of the prospects for to-morrow, Panky?" asked Gatty a little later.

"Rosy," replied Pankhurst.

"Think we shall win?"

"Certain!"

But in No. 10 Study Pankhurst turned to his chum with a pensive brow.

"I wonder how the match will turn out to-morrow," he remarked.

The 5th Chapter.

A Rascal's Reward.

SATURDAY morning dawned cold and clear. It was a fine day for the Form match, and the juniors of Cliveden hailed it with glee.

Morning school was voted a bore. Many of the eager youngsters earned impositions that morning. They thought football, and they talked football. Football was in their minds and in their hearts.

But morning school, like everything else, had an end at last. The youngsters trooped out of the class-rooms talking and chattering, with one eternal topic—football! Some of the seniors took an interest in the match, too, and Crane of the Fifth had promised to referee for the juniors—an act of kindness which was very well received. It was necessary to have a strictly impartial referee, and one who did not belong to the Fourth. Crane had his faults, but he was a good sportsman.

The kick-off was timed for three o'clock. After dinner, Pankhurst and Price strolled down to the field to have a look at the ground. They were joined by Philpot. Pankhurst glanced curiously at the Shylock of the Fourth.

"I want to speak to you chaps," said Philpot.

"Speak away," said Pankhurst briefly. He did not like Philpot, and he never pretended to.

"It's about the match."

"Well, what about it?"

"Do you think you are going to win?"

"Yes."

"I mean, honest Injun—do you think I shall let you get any goals?"

"You won't be able to help yourself, I expect."

"Oh, if that's the kind of talk you're going in for—"

"What the dickens are you driving at?" asked Pankhurst, impatiently. "To come down to facts, I suppose we have equal chances. What about it?"

"You want to win, though?"

"Of course."

"I mean, you want to win particularly, to put the Combine in their place—and you'd give a lot to win."

"Yes—"

"Blessed if I see what you're driving at Philpot. I suppose you don't want me to give you five bob to let the ball pass you, do you?"

Philpot laughed uneasily.

"No; not exactly."

"Well, what are you getting at, then?"

"I mean—I'd like to oblige you, and one good turn deserves another. To come down to facts," said Philpot, lowering his voice, "I'm a bit above your weight, and if I keep goal as well as I can if I choose, you haven't an earthly."

"I don't believe it; but supposing it is so—what then?"

"Well, I can do you a good turn. You haven't forgotten, I suppose, how you joined with the fellows in No. 4 Study to bust up my business?"

"Your moneylending among the juniors, do you mean?"

"Yes, that's what I mean. Now, if you two fellows took different sides, I shouldn't be afraid of those rotters. Grahame, the prefect, would stick to me if he wasn't afraid of being shown up. Will you back me up if I—"

Philpot hesitated.

"If you what?" asked Pankhurst, very quietly, but with a steely glitter in his eyes.

"Well, to put it plain, you've only got to give me your word to back me up, and you'll win in the match to-day."

Pankhurst affected not to understand.

"How can we win, except by beating Neville's lot?" he asked; "and we're going to do that, anyhow, if we can."

"How dull you are, Pankhurst! I mean that I'll let the ball in—"

"And give away the game, do you mean?"

"Yes. You haven't a chance now; you'll have a certainty then. If you are licked the Combine will crow over you no end. If you lick them, you'll be the top of the Form. You can't afford to refuse my offer. You—hang it! What are you up to?" yelled Philpot.

Pankhurst had suddenly gripped him by the back of the collar, with a grip like that of a vice, and was pummeling him across the Close at a great rate. Price following, administering an occasional running kick to help Philpot along.

Philpot didn't want to go, but there was no gainsaying Panky and Price. With that grip on his collar he had to go, whether he liked it or not, and Price's football boots helped him considerably. Philpot wriggled and howled, but it was no use. Pankhurst ran him right on, straight towards the spot where the Combine were standing, talking to one another, near the entrance to the house.

"Hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Poindexter, "what are you doing with our goalkeeper?"

"Help!" gasped Philpot. "Help! They—"

Pankhurst gave Philpot a final twist that sent him staggering in a heap at the feet of the Combine.

"There, you cad!" he gasped, winded by his exertions. "I'll tell you what he's just said to me, kids—"

"It's a lie!" screamed Philpot. "It's a lie! I never—"

"How do you know?" grinned Price. "Panky hasn't said anything yet."

"What is it, Panky?" asked Dick Neville, quietly. "I know you wouldn't tell a lie, whatever that grovelling cad says. What's the row?"

"He's offered to sell the match to us, that's all," said Pankhurst breathlessly. "If we'll back him up in starting his moneylending again, we're to win. That's his offer!"

The Combine looked at one another.

"It's a lie!" shrieked Philpot, as he saw the looks on the faces of the footballers he had intended to betray. "I never—I mean, I was only joking—of course, I should never—"

"Nuff said, I guess," said Poindexter. "This is very decent of you, Panky. We'll deal with that dirty traitor!"

"I would have wiped up the Close with him for making me such an offer," said Pankhurst, with a glare at the Shylock of the Fourth; "but

with all the strength of his arm—a very powerful one. Then he looked at his chums.

"Think that's enough?" he asked.

Dick Neville nodded.

"Sure and it's not enough," said Micky Flynn. "But I dare say Philpot can make it do: Would you care for any more, Philpot?"

"No," yelled Philpot.

Poindexter threw down the rope.

"I hope that'll be a lesson to you, you pesky scoundrel!" he said. "You're out of the team now, whatever kind of a goalkeeper we pick up. Scat!"

And Philpot "scatted."

The 6th Chapter.

The Form Match.

TURN out!" "Don't keep us waiting all the afternoon."

"Back up!"

The Cliveden juniors were crowding round the football field. It was close upon time for the kick-off. The teams had not appeared yet. It was known that Philpot had left Neville's team, and that Dick had had some difficulty in finding a passable goalie to replace him, though the cause of Philpot's leaving was not generally known. All the members of the Fourth who were not playing were round the field, and nearly all the Third Form and the Shell, as well as a goodly sprinkling of seniors.

"Here they are!"

"Bravo!"

Cheers seemed about equally divided for the Neville party and the Pankites. All the players were looking very fit, especially the Combine

satisfaction of his supporters changed to disappointment.

That mistake made the Pankites more careful, and the narrow escape was a lesson to the Nevillians, too. The game went on more steadily, but again and again the Pankites came on goal-ward, and the Combine's forwards had to do more defending than their backs did, the backs simply not being up to the form of the assailants.

As the first half drew towards its close, without a score on either side, Pankhurst and Price made a big effort. They rushed the ball down the field, favoured by the wind, and packed before the goal, and shots rained in on King. King did his best, and better than had been expected of him, but he was not equal to an attack like that.

Right in came the ball from Pankhurst's foot, and it lodged in the net, and there was a cheer from the excited spectators.

"Goal!"

"Goal! Hurrah!"

"Good old Panky!"

It was an indisputable goal, and when, a few minutes later, the first half ended, the Pankites closed one up, and the Nevillians with a blank score.

Both sides were pretty well blown with the pace of the game, and glad of a rest.

"Never mind," said Poindexter, as he rubbed his shoulder, which was aching a little from the effects of a rather rough charge, "in the next half we shall have the wind behind us, and that will make a lot of difference, as it's so keen."

"Yes, it has helped Panky a little," said Dick.

"We've done well considering. If we had had a good man in goal I'd undertake to lick them hollow. As it is—"

"Sure and we've an equal chance, anyway."

"I guess that's about it. Hallo, time's up."

It was Pankhurst's turn to kick off against the wind. The breeze was freshening, and it was very cold, and so the advantage was greater for the Combine, now ends were changed, than it had been in the first half for the Old Firm.

Pankhurst kicked, and the Pankites followed it up with a rush, which bore them fairly into the enemy's territory, where they showed a strong disposition to stay.

The tussle surged ever nearer to the goal, but Jeffreys cleared with a long kick that sent the ball past the half-way line, and the struggle was transferred to Pankhurst's half. Then it was doggedly obstinate. The ball continually went into touch. The Pankite goal had several narrow escapes, but the second half wore on without a score.

The spectators showed visible signs of impatience. They wanted goals, but goals did not seem to be coming.

"Play up!"

"Go for 'em!"

Taking no heed of comments or advice, the young footballers played up for all they were worth. It was getting towards time, and still that solitary goal in the first half was all the score sheet had to show. Now, however, Pankhurst and Price led their merry men in a determined attack, and the struggle was fierce in front of the Combine's goal.

It looked a sure thing for the Old Firm, and a second goal then would have settled the matter, for there could not have been possible time for the Combine to equalise. But it was not to be. Jeffreys, playing up well, succeeded in clearing again, and the ball came to Micky Flynn. He was charged over the next moment, but not before he had passed to Dick Neville, who was away with the ball in a flash.

Away, away! Leaving the whole press of players behind him, Dick darted up the field. Poindexter was close at his heels, on the right, ready to back him up. The halves were falling back, but they were not in time to get in Neville's way. Only the backs had a chance to stop him, and if they failed, it depended upon the goalie only. The backs bravely tackled the task, but as they rushed upon him, Dick heeled the ball to Poindexter. Lincoln G. Poindexter had been looking for it, and he was ready.

Dick went over the next instant under the charging backs, but as he rolled on the sward, Poindexter captured the ball. He had been behind his leader when he received the pass, and there was no danger of offside. He rushed right on before the backs had any idea that he had the ball. The goalkeeper was only half-prepared, and the whizzing shot that Poindexter sent in was too much for Greene.

The leather missed his clutching hand by a foot or more, and plumped into the net. There was a roar.

"Goal!"

"Good old Poindexter!"

Ph-e-p!

Crane was blowing the whistle. Time was up, but the Combine, with as fine a bit of play as had ever been seen on a Cliveden field, had equalised. It was a draw, and honours were easy.

The players were heartily cheered as they crowded off the field. Pankhurst, grinning, slapped Dick Neville on the shoulder, and thumped Poindexter in the small of the back.

"It was splendid," he said. "Do you know, I'm not disappointed that it's only a draw. Honours are easy, and I don't mind."

"Neither do I," grinned Dick. "It's been a good game, and I admit that the result is about what it should be, on our form."

"I guess so," said Lincoln G. Poindexter.

"Hallo, Greene, what do you want?"

"What price that feed in the study?" laughed Greene.

The Combine laughed, too.

"Oh, that's all right, I guess," said Poindexter. "Come and welcome. And I say, Panky and Price, you come, too, when you've changed. It's been a jolly good game, and we'll keep it up a bit to celebrate the occasion."

And they did.

THE END.

("The Cliveden Waxworks" next week.)



"You're very kind," said Greene, "I—Ow—" The "Ow" broke from him as the table jerked, and a cup of hot tea was projected against his chest. He jumped up as if moved by electricity.

I thought I'd leave him in your hands. The beast!"

"Quite so."

"Thanks, Panky," said Dick Neville. "And I say, old chap, I take back what I said about your not being able to play football."

Pankhurst grinned.

"Oh, that's all right. I fancy neither of us meant half we said. I know I didn't. I expect we shall lick you this time, Neville; but you're better off without that rotter in your ranks. Come on, Pricey."

And the Old Firm walked off. Philpot was on his feet, and the Combine were round him, cutting off his escape. He looked doubtfully from one to another.

"It—it was only a joke!" he mumbled.

"Was it?" said Poindexter grimly. "Well, we are going to joke with you now. Come into the gym."

"I won't! I—"

"Will you take it quietly, or shall we show you up to all the Fourth, and get you a Form licking? You know what that means!"

"I—I'll come."

The Combine marched the rascal into the gym. Poindexter looked round, and then directed Philpot to hang himself over a horizontal bar. Then he picked up a rope.

"I—I won't!"

"Which will you have—a dozen, well laid on, or a Form licking?"

"I—I—let me go—I—"

The rope swished through the air. Philpot wriggled and squirmed, but he dared not yell, lest he should attract others to learn the cause of his punishment. He had expected to find Pankhurst willing to accept his offer, making the mistake of judging others to be as base as himself. But he knew that if all the Fourth Form came to know of his rascally treachery, his life would not be worth living at Cliveden.

Poindexter gave him twelve lashes, laid on

and the Old Firm. King was keeping goal for the Nevillians, in the place of Philpot. Crane was on the field, in a Norfolk suit with a big whistle.

"Go it!"

"Get to work!"

The two captains tossed for choice of goals, and the Pankhurst sympathisers cheered when Panky was seen to point to the end from which the wind was blowing.

Ph-e-p! went the whistle, when the teams had lined up, and the ball rolled from the foot of Dick Neville.

"Play up, Pankhurst!"

"Play up, Puntdodger!"

The young footballers played up. Neville, Flynn, and Poindexter were all in the front line, and they adopted rushing tactics. They knew that their strength lay in attack, their defence being terribly weak after the throwing out of Philpot.

And success seemed likely to attend their tactics, too.

They brought the ball right through the Pankites, and up to the goal, in less than five minutes from the start, and Greene was forced to defend.

But Greene did it, and did it well, and the ball went out to Gatty at back, and Gatty sent it up the field with a terrific kick.

The Pankhurst forwards were after it in a twinkling, and away they went with it, with the Combine tearing after them like madmen.

Pankhurst passed to Price, and Price kicked for goal, and there was a yell as the ball went through the posts and climbed the net.

"Hurrah!"

But a counter-shout rang over the field.

"Boo! Offside! Boo!"

Crane's whistle rang shrilly out. It was undoubtedly offside, only a single back being between Price and the goal when he received the pass. Pankhurst did not dispute it, and the