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THE BOYS' FRIEND 1D

EVERY
TUESDAY.

The object of THE BOYS' FRIEND is to Amuse, to Instruct, and to Advise Boys.

No. 501.—VOL. X. NEW SERIES.]

ONE PENNY.

[WEEK ENDING JANUARY 14, 1911.]

THE NEW BROOM

HOW THE JUNIORS
BROUGHT THEIR PETS TO
RAYTON COLLEGE.
(A screamingly funny incident you must
not miss.)



THE NEW BROOM.

A Grand New Story
of Rayton College.
By MAXWELL SCOTT.

* * An introduction for the new reader
appears on the next page.

A Conference at the Blue Boar.
THAT night, having finished his work, the new school porter, Cruft, strolled down to the village and turned into the Blue Boar. It was evidently not his first visit to that disreputable public-house, for the landlord, Eli Hodgson, welcomed him with a familiar nod.

"Fine night, Mister Cruft," he remarked.

"Very!" said Cruft. "Anybody in the bar-parlour?"

"No."

"Then bring me a pint of beer. And bring one for yourself as well. I want to have a bit of a talk to you."

He turned into the bar-parlour. Hodgson joined him a few moments later, set down the two pints of beer, and closed the door.

"Is it about wot yer said the other night?" he asked.

"What did I say?" said Cruft cautiously.

"Yer said as 'ow yer knew of a scheme for makin' yer fortune if only yer could find a pal to 'elp yer," said Hodgson. "I've been wonderin' ever since wot yer meant."

"And I've been wonderin' ever since if I could trust you," said Cruft. "Trust me?"

"Yes. I can't carry out my scheme without 'elp; but the chap that 'elps me mustn't be too squeamish, and he mustn't be afraid of takin' a bit of risk over the job."

Hodgson drew his chair a little nearer and lowered his voice.

"Is it a crooked job, then?" he asked.

Cruft nodded.

"Well," said Hodgson, "I'm not above takin' on a crooked job if the pay is good enough."

"Oh, the pay'll be all right!" said Cruft. "There'll be a couple of thousand for you, anyhow, if the thing comes off."

Two thousand pounds! Hodgson's eyes grew big and round like saucers. Then a sudden thought occurred to him, and his face went very white.

"It's not murder, is it?" he whispered huskily. "I—I'm not squeamish, but I draws the line at that."

Cruft laughed.

"So do I," he said. "No, it isn't murder."

"Wot is it, then?"

"Can I trust you?" said Cruft, eyeing him keenly. "If I tell you what my scheme is will you swear not to betray me even if you don't join me?"

"On my oath, not a word shall ever cross my lips," said Hodgson.

"Well, my plan is this," said Cruft. "There's a lad up at the school called Cyrus Sharpe. 'Is father, as I 'appen

(Continued on the next page.)

The new Head-master decrees that every boy at Rayton should keep a pet. The above sketch depicts how his order was executed! (See this week's grand instalment of our new school serial.)



(Continued from the previous page.)

to know, is a New York millionaire, and Cyrus is his only son. You've heard, maybe, of millionaires' children being kidnaped and held to ransom? Well, if we could kidnap Cyrus, and hold him somewhere we could write to his father and tell him that his son was in our power and he'd never see him again if he didn't send us ten thousand pounds.

"And yer think he'd send the money?" said Hodgson. "I know he would," said Cruft. "He simply worships the lad. He'd send 'arf a million if he thought the lad's life was in danger and he couldn't save 'im any other way."

"But 'ow are yer goin' to manage to—" began Hodgson. "I'll explain the details of my plan afterwards," interrupted Cruft. "What I want to know now is—are you game to 'elp me?"

Hodgson hesitated for a moment, but only for a moment. "Yes," he said, "I'll 'elp yer."

"I thought you would," said Cruft. "I thought you'd never be such a fool as to jib at the chance of pickin' up two thousand pounds as easy as that!"

"I don't know about easy!" growled Hodgson. "I can see a lot of awkward corners that'll 'ave to be turned. To start off with—'ow are yer goin' to kidnap the lad?"

"Oh, that'll be the easiest part of the whole job!" declared Cruft. "I live up at the school, you know, and I see the boy twenty times a day. When we've got everything ready it'll be the easiest thing in the world for me to lure 'im into my clutches some evenin' and bind 'im and gag 'im and 'im over to you."

"And 'im over to me?" exclaimed Hodgson. "Of course!" said Cruft. "I can't keep 'im up at the school, can I? That's why I want your 'elp."

"But what am I to do with 'im?" asked Hodgson. "Ide 'im," said Cruft tersely. "Where?"

"That's one of the things I want to talk to you about to-night," said Cruft. "We don't want to 'arm the lad; we only want to keep him prisoner till 'is father stumps up the ransom. There's no need either to treat 'im badly; and so long as he behaves 'isself and gives us no trouble there's no reason why he shouldn't 'ave plenty of good food and everything he wants, except 'is freedom."

"The place where we 'ide 'im," he continued, "must be some place where you can easily get at 'im to take 'im 'is food and to see that he's all right. It must also be some place where nobody will be likely to stumble across him accidentally. Couldn't you 'ide 'im in one of the attics of this 'ouse?"

Hodgson vigorously shook his head. "It's not to be thought of," he said. "In the first place, I couldn't get 'im into the 'ouse and carry 'im upstairs without bein' seen. And in the second place, with customers comin' in and out of the 'ouse at all hours of the day, some of 'em would be bound to 'ear 'im if he shouted for 'elp."

"We could keep 'im gagged all the time he was 'ere," suggested Cruft. "I'd 'ave to ungag 'im to give 'im 'is meals," retorted Hodgson. "And one shout would give the show away."

"Well, we've got to 'ide 'im somewhere not far from this 'ouse," said Cruft. "I'll be busy all day at the school, so I won't be able to look after the lad after we've kidnaped 'im. You'll 'ave to do that; and you can't look after 'im and attend to your business if he's imprisoned somewhere at the other end of the village. Are there any out-buildings attached to this 'ouse?"

"Yes," said Hodgson. "There's a stable and a coach-house at the back, with a 'ay-loft over them."

"Do you keep a 'orse?" asked Cruft. "No."

"Do you use the buildings for anything else?" "No. They've been empty and locked up ever since I came 'ere."

"'Ow far are they from the 'ouse?" "They're on the far side of the field at the back."

"Does anybody ever visit 'em?" "Nobody but me, and I don't often go."

"Could anybody in the 'ouse or in the road, 'ear anybody in those buildings if he shouted?" "Oh, no!"

"Could the loft be made secure—secure enough to prevent the lad escapin'?" "With a few alterations—yes."

"Then it seems to me the question is settled," said Cruft. "Why not 'ide the boy in the loft?" "Myes!" said Hodgson. "It might be done."

"Let's go and 'ave a look at the place," suggested Cruft. "I'll 'ave to get the keys and a lantern first," said Hodgson.

He obtained the keys, and lit a lantern; then the two men left the house by the back door, crossed the field, and inspected the deserted out-buildings which Hodgson had described.

Cruft was more than satisfied with his inspection. "I couldn't wish for a better place than this," he said, glancing round the bare and empty hayloft. "If you board up that window, and fix a bolt to the under side of this trap-door, and put a new lock on the stable door, the place will be as safe as one of 'is Majesty's prisons."

"We shall want a few sticks of furniture," he added—"a table and a chair if you can spare 'em—or two boxes if you can't. You can make up a bed on the floor in that corner, and you can— But I needn't enter into details. I'll leave the furnishing to you. 'Ow soon can you 'ave the room ready?"

"By the end of next week, I should think," said Hodgson. "Good!" said Cruft. "Let me know as soon as you are ready, and then I'll arrange about kidnappin' the lad."

As they retraced their steps towards the house Hodgson put the question he had tried to put before, when Cruft had interrupted him.

"'Ow are yer goin' to manage about writin' to 'is father after we've kidnaped 'im?" he asked. "If yer give yer proper name and address the old man'll cable to the police, and we'll be arrested. If yer don't give yer name and address 'ow can the old man send yer the money?"

"That'll be all right!" said Cruft airily. "I've a pal in New York who'll manage that part of the business for us. As soon as we've got the lad safely locked up in that loft I'll write to my pal, and he'll either write to old man Sharpe, or interview 'im, and get the money. He's a sort of specialist in blackmail, is my pal, and nobody knows better than he does 'ow to manage an affair like this. He'll get the money quick enough, and he'll send it to me minus 'is commission. Then you and I will quietly disappear, leavin' a note behind us to say where the lad is imprisoned."

Hodgson started and pulled up. "Then I'll 'ave to clear out of Rayton when this job is finished?" he said.

"Of course!" said Cruft. "And I'll be a fugitive from justice for the rest o' my life!" said Hodgson.

Cruft laughed uneasily. "Mr. Sharpe will have to swear not to prosecute us," he said. "That will be one of the conditions of the ransom."

Hodgson shook his head. "Mr. Sharpe may promise till he's blue in the face," he said; "but the lad will tell the police who kidnaped 'im, and the police'll take no notice of no promises. 'Arf an hour after the lad 'as been set free there'll be warrants out for our arrest."

"We'll 'ave disappeared by then," said Cruft; "and it'll be our own fault if the police ever find us."

Again Hodgson shook his head. "When I said I'd 'elp yer," he said, "I didn't expect it was goin' to end in my 'avin' to spend the rest of my days in dodgin' the police."

"Does that mean you want to go back on your promise?" snarled Cruft.

"No," said Hodgson. "It means as I'm not goin' to take all that risk for two thousand pounds. Mr.

Sharpe will fork out ten thousand, yer say. 'Ow much will yer pal want for commission?" "Two thousand, probably," said Cruft.

"That leaves eight to divide between you and me," said Hodgson. "Yer want to take six, and give me two. That's not good enough for me. Share and share alike, sez I. Give me four, and keep four yerself, and I'll 'elp yer. If yer won't agree to that I wash my 'ands of the whole business."

An expression of malignant fury swept across Cruft's face. But it was gone before Hodgson saw it.

"All right!" said Cruft, with a forced laugh. "It's downright robbery, but I agree. If the thing comes off I'll give you 'arf of what I make."

But to himself he muttered: "When once the money is in my pocket it's little of it you'll ever see—or of me either, my friend!"

The Challenge Accepted.

PHILIP, it will be remembered, had written on Friday to the captain of St. Benedict's School, challenging their first eleven to a match, either at Rayton or at St. Benedict's, on any Wednesday or Saturday that was convenient to them.

The Benedictines' reply was received on Tuesday morning, and was couched in the following terms:

"Dear Sir,—We are delighted to hear that you have started a Soccer team at Rayton, and we wish you all success. We shall be pleased to play you on our ground next Saturday. If you leave Rayton by the 12.32 you will arrive here about half-past two. If we kick off at three the match will be over in time for you to leave by the 5.15. We will give you tea, of course, and, I hope, a jolly good beating! Hoping to hear from you that this is convenient,
Yours sincerely,
J. HOWARD (Captain)."

At the conclusion of morning school Philip called the members of his team together and read them the letter.

"I propose that Ashley writes and accepts the invitation," said Holcroft. "I second that," said Tubb.

"Wait a minute!" said Philip. "Before we accept the invitation we shall have to speak to the doctor." "Why?" asked Holcroft.

"'Cause," said Philip, "if we are to leave here by the 12.32 next Saturday we shall have to be excused the last half-hour of morning school, and we shall have to have an early dinner."

Holcroft nodded. "I hadn't thought of that," he said. "But can't we leave by a later train? I hate the idea of askin' a favour of the Gander."

"So do I," said Philip. "But there isn't another train till 2.45. If we left by that we shouldn't reach St. Benedict's till nearly five, by which time it would be growing dark."

"There's no help for it, then," said Holcroft gloomily. "I propose that Tubb and Ashley be a deputation to interview the doctor after dinner."

"This proposal was agreed to; and, accordingly, when dinner was over, Tubb and Philip repaired to the doctor's study.

"If you please, sir," began Philip, "our football team has received an invitation from St. Benedict's to go there next Saturday and play them a match."

"Dr. Gandy frowned. "So you wish to be excused from attendin' my half-holiday lecture on that day?" he said.

"Yes, sir," said Philip. "But that isn't all, sir. If we accept the invitation we shall have to leave here by the 12.32. As you know, sir, morning school doesn't end till a quarter past twelve, and dinner isn't ready, in an ordinary way, till one o'clock. So we've come to ask you, sir, if we may be let out of school

about a quarter to twelve, and if we may have dinner not later than twelve? Of course, sir, this doesn't apply to all the juniors, but only to the eleven who are going to St. Benedict's."

The frown deepened on Dr. Gandy's face. "It has always been done before, sir," said Tubb. "When Dr. Paul was head-master here, whenever our cricket team, or our Rugby team, had an away match, he always let the players off before the end of morning school."

"I have no concern with what Dr. Paul did," said the doctor coldly. "I am head-master here now. As you know, I strongly disapprove of your wasting so much time on outdoor games, and consequently, on general principals, I do not feel disposed to grant your request. In the present instance, moreover, I have special reason for not feeling disposed to accede to your request."

"Since my appointment as head-master here," he continued, "I have endeavoured to introduce certain reforms into the school. In what spirit have you and your fellow-juniors met me? I instituted a series of half-holiday lectures—you have never attended one of them. I advised each one of you to keep a pet of some kind, and to learn to play some musical instrument. Not one of you has thought fit to follow my advice. You objected to your dormitory windows being left open at night, and some of you refused—absolutely refused—to eat the food I provided for you."

"In a word," he concluded, "instead of aiding me, and working with me for the good of the school, you have set yourselves to oppose me, and to thwart my schemes of reform. And then you expect me to forget all that, and to grant you a favour!"

"Then you will not let us off next Saturday, sir?" asked Philip.

"I reserve my decision for the present," said the doctor. "If, during the next few days, I observe a more conciliatory spirit amongst you—if I see an earnest and sincere desire on your part to fall in with my plans—I may possibly grant you the favour you ask."

"Can't you give us your decision now, sir?" asked Philip. "You see, sir, we ought to write to St. Benedict's to-day and let them know whether we are going or not."

"I have nothing to add to what I have already said," replied the doctor. "I reserve my decision for the present. Whether or not I grant your request depends on your conduct during the next few days. For instance, as you know, I am delivering another of my half-holiday lectures to-morrow afternoon. If you all turn up at that lecture, I shall certainly be more inclined than I am at present favourably to consider your request. If you do not attend the lecture, I shall draw my own conclusions."

Philip and Tubb withdrew, and reported what the doctor had said to their chums.

"The beast!" said Holcroft. "So he'll only let us go to St. Benedict's on condition that we eat humble pie and swallow his rotten fads and cranks. Well, I won't for one!"

"Neither will I," said Rigden. "No surrender! That's my motto!"

"I don't agree with you," said Tubb, with a twinkle in his eye. "If our beloved head-master desires us to attend his learned lectures, and is anxious that we should start keepin' pets, I think we ought to humour him. Anyhow, I shall go to his lecture to-morrow afternoon, and I shall take a pet of some kind with me just to show him that I'm willin' to oblige him."

"And what sort of a pet will you take?" sneered Holcroft.

"A sheep, if I can borrow one!" said Tubb solemnly. "None of your footlin' little white mice or tame rabbits for me! If I'm goin' to keep a pet, I'll keep a big 'un. If I can't borrow a sheep, I'll take a donkey or a goat!"

Just for a moment his companions

thought that he was joking. When at last they saw that he was serious—when they grasped his idea—they burst into shouts of delighted merriment.

"Tubb's hit the right nail on the head without a doubt!" cried Holcroft. "Instead of defyin' the Gander, let's kill his rotten schemes with ridicule. Let's all go to the lecture to-morrow afternoon, and let each of us take an animal or a bird of some kind with him—a sheep, or a dog, or a cow, or even a goose or a bardoer fowl!"

"It'll be the greatest rag there's ever been at Rayton!" chuckled Card. "And the Gander won't be able to say a word, because we'll only be following his advice. I vote we do as Holcroft says!"

"Hear, hear! I'm willin'!" "Agreed, agreed!" chorused the others.

"How and when and where shall we collect the giddy menagerie?" asked Rutherford.

"We can discuss that afterwards," said Philip. "In the meantime, what about this invitation to St. Benedict's? We ought to reply to-day, you know."

"Wire to them and ask them if they can come here on Saturday, instead of us goin' there," suggested Tubb. "If they can, that settles the matter, and we needn't worry about the Gander."

The others having approved of this suggestion, Philip wrote out the telegram and gave it to Cruft to take down to the village. Then he and the rest of the members of the new club donned their jerseys and football-boots and trooped down to the "Swamp" for their customary pick-up game.

A New Way to Play an Old Game.

AS was usual on these occasions, Philip and Holcroft picked the two sides, and the game was just about to begin when the spectacled figure of Dr. Gandy was seen striding down to the field from the direction of the school.

"He's comin' to forbid us to play!" groaned Tubb. "What shall we do? This isn't a half-holiday, and we've always been allowed to play games from two to four. Shall we give in to him if he tries to stop us, or shall we defy him?"

"Better wait till we hear what he has to say," counselled Philip.

They had not many seconds to wait. The doctor strode through the gate and beckoned to the boys to gather round him.

"As some of you know," he said, "I am at present seriously considering the advisability of prohibiting football at the school. I am told it is a most rough and violent game, but I have never seen a match, so I have come down here this afternoon to watch you play, in order that I may form my own opinion."

"We are very pleased you have done so, sir!" said Tubb, with a sly wink at his companions. "We are only too glad to have the opportunity of showin' you that there is nothing rough or violent about football, which is really a most polite and gentle game."

The doctor blinked at him suspiciously.

"Polite and gentle," he repeated. "If such be the case, I have been grossly misinformed as to the character of the game. However, proceed with your match, and I will watch."

As the players trooped on to the field Tubb whispered a few instructions to Philip and Holcroft. These passed the word to the others, and by the time the players had lined up and the ball had been placed on the centre-mark, every boy on the field knew the part he had to play.

Tubb and Philip were the opposing centre-forwards, and, as Philip had won the toss, Tubb should have kicked off. Instead of doing so, however, he bowed to Philip and said, in a voice loud enough for the doctor to hear:

"Will you kick off, my dear Ashley, or shall I?"

"Just as you like, my dear Tubb," replied Philip.

"Then the honour shall be yours," said Tubb. "But allow me, I perceive a particle of mud on the ball." He picked up the ball, wiped it carefully with his handkerchief, and replaced it on the mark.

"Now, please be so good as to kick off," he said.

Philip gave the ball a gentle kick, which sent it rolling about a dozen yards. Holcroft on one side, and Card on the other, ran towards it, but on reaching it, they pulled up and bowed to each other.

AN INTRODUCTION FOR THE NEW READER OF THIS GRAND SERIAL.

Philip Ashley, a brilliant young scholar, saves the life of Sir David Rendle's only daughter. In consequence of this action, Sir David adopts him, sends him to Rayton College, giving him all the benefits he intended for his unscrupulous nephew, who has deceived him, and who has now been packed off to Canada to make a fresh start in life.

The new term at Rayton College is to begin, and Phil starts on his journey to Rayton. He is accompanied by Cyrus A. Sharpe, an American lad whom you will all like. Arriving at the school the collegers, to

their great indignation, learn that Dr. Gandy, the new head-master, is a vegetarian and a great believer in fresh air, and he has already adopted many eccentric ideas in the school.

The first vegetarian dinner is served up to the boys, but the juniors absolutely decline to touch it. The doctor is seized with a fit of rage, and storms and raves.

Ashley, backed up by his chums, reminds Dr. Gandy that it is against the rules of the school to be fed on vegetable foods, and the doctor has performed to give way, though he has many other plans in his mind for reforming the school.

(Now read this week's splendid chapters.)

"Your ball, I believe," said Holcroft politely.

"No, yours," said Card.

"You are sure you don't mind if I kick it?" asked Holcroft.

"Delighted, I'm sure," murmured Card.

Holcroft kicked the ball towards the goal which Hepworth was defending. Pritchard, one of the backs, forgetting for the moment the part he had to play, dashed across and stopped the ball.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" he cried, suddenly recollecting himself. "So sorry I stopped your shot, Holcroft, old man. It was quite a mistake, I assure you. Did you wish the ball to go into the goal?"

"If you've no objection," said Holcroft.

"Not the slightest," said Pritchard. "Please come and kick it in. Hepworth, kindly stand out of the way."

"With pleasure!" said Hepworth, stepping to one side of the goal.

Holcroft strolled up to the ball and gently kicked it into the net, while the rest of the players clapped their hands and murmured softly "Bravo! Well played!"

"That's a goal to us, sir!" explained Tubb to the doctor. "It's what the newspaper reporters would describe as a sparklin' run by Holcroft, endin' in a brilliant goal. You wouldn't call that rough and violent, would you?"

The doctor did not answer. He was frankly puzzled. This was certainly not the sort of "brutal and degrading" game he had been led to expect. He had a vague suspicion that the boys might possibly be "pulling his leg," but when he glanced round at their innocent, artless-looking faces he dismissed the suspicion as unworthy.

The ball was replaced in the centre, and Philip kicked off. There was a further exchange of compliments, and more bowing and scraping, and once, when Carfax slipped and fell, all the players on the field ran to his assistance, and helped him to his feet, and dusted him down, and tenderly inquired if he were hurt.

In less than ten minutes each side had scored five goals, and Philip's side was on its way to score a sixth when Mr. Sopworth arrived on the scene.

Now, Mr. Sopworth was a good deal of a fool, but he had seen a football match before—he had seen several football matches—and he simply gasped when he saw the extraordinary antics in which the boys were indulging.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed, hurrying to the doctor's side. "This is most extraordinary. I say this is most extraordinary. Pray tell me what these boys are supposed to be doing?"

"They are playing football," said the doctor. "You are like me, I suppose, and have never seen a game before. I had always been told that the game was very rough and brutal, but I must confess that these boys have completely removed that false impression. It is not an intellectual game, of course, but, apart from that, I see nothing in it to object to. On the contrary, I think it is really a very nice and gentlemanly pastime."

Mr. Sopworth gazed at him pitiably. The doctor's childlike simplicity was an eye-opener to him. He could hardly credit it.

"Is it possible," he said, "that you do not realise that these insolent youths are poking fun at you? I say,

is it possible that you do not realise that they are poking fun at you?"

The doctor started, and an angry light leaped into his eyes.

"You think so?" he said harshly.

"Why, of course they are!" said Mr. Sopworth. "This is not football. It is a ridiculous burlesque of the game—a travesty, a mockery, a farce, got up for your benefit. They are laughing at you all the time—guying you—pulling your leg, as they would say in their vulgar slang!"

"If I thought they dared!" said the doctor, between his clenched teeth.

"If you doubt it, come with me," said Mr. Sopworth, "and in a very few minutes I will prove to you that I am right."

Without a word the doctor allowed Mr. Sopworth to lead him off the field and back to the school.

"Now that you are no longer watching them," said Mr. Sopworth, "they will start playing proper football. If we presently return, you will see for yourself how they have fooled you. But we will not return by the way we came. I say we will not return by the way we came. They would see you coming, and would be on their guard. We will go round by the back of the cricket pavilion, and come upon them unawares."

"Soapy Sam"—as the boys had nicknamed Mr. Sopworth—was in his element now. As the reader knows, he was both a toady and a sneak, and nothing was so gratifying to his mean and spiteful nature as a chance to get the boys into hot water.

"Now, we will go back!" he said presently. "Then you will see what you will see. This way!"

He conducted the doctor across the quad, along the path behind the gym, past the five courts, and so down to the cricket-field. From there, after climbing the fence at the back of the pavilion, he led him to a small gate which opened into the "Swamp," at the opposite end to the other gate.

A high hedge hid the players from their view—and also hid the two masters from the players' view—until they reached the gate. If they could not see the players, however, they could hear them; and what they heard were not polite remarks and softly-murmured compliments, but frenzied and ferocious yells of:

"Stop him!" "Down him!" "Lay him out!"

And when they reached the gate, how vastly different was the scene from that on which the doctor had gazed a few minutes earlier!

As Mr. Sopworth had predicted, as soon as the doctor had left the field the boys had dropped all further humbug, and had started their match in real earnest.

At the moment when the two masters appeared at the gate, Philip was racing down the centre with the ball at his feet. A half-back tackled him, and was promptly sent sprawling on his back. One of the backs attempted to stop him, and met with a similar fate. Then, amid frantic yells of "Shoot! Shoot!" Philip steadied himself and shot.

The goalkeeper was a fat Fourth-Former named Pobble. He flung himself at the ball and caught it, but it wriggled out of his grasp.

Quick as thought he grabbed it up again, but ere he could throw it round the post, Philip hurled himself upon him, with an ear-splitting whoop of triumph; and charged both Pobble and the ball into the net!

"Goal! Goal! Goal!"

A chorus of exultant yells rang out from Philip's comrades. Then a sudden deathlike silence fell on them. For, in the midst of their yelling and cheering, they saw Dr. Gandy and Mr. Sopworth standing at the gate.

"Phew!" whistled Philip. "We're in for it now!"

Outwardly calm, but inwardly boiling with rage, the doctor opened the gate and strode on to the field of play.

"So this is how you show your respect for your headmaster, is it?" he said grimly. "You take advantage of my ignorance of the game to hold me up to ridicule! You make me the butt of your insolent and impertinent jests! You have the effrontery to amuse yourselves at my expense! But I will show you that I am not to be trifled with!"

"In the first place," he continued, "you will each of you receive an imposition of a thousand lines, and you will be gated until your task is accomplished to my satisfaction. In the second place, your half-holiday leave will be stopped until further notice; and, needless to say, you will not be allowed to go to St. Benedict's next Saturday. Finally, subject to the approval of the Board of Governors, football will be struck off the list of permissible games, and no further exhibitions of such a degrading pastime—either matches or practice games—will be allowed to take place!"

"Hear, hear!" murmured Mr. Sopworth, rubbing his hands. "I myself have always strongly disapproved of football. I say I myself have always strongly disapproved of football, and I am delighted to hear that it is now abolished!"

But Mr. Sopworth's delight was a trifle premature. The grand old winter game was not yet abolished at Rayton College—as we shall see.

How the Juniors Started Keeping Pets.

STRANGE as it may appear at first sight, the doctor's angry tirade, instead of filling the juniors with despair, filled them with delight. It is true that he had announced that football would be forbidden for the future, but he had added the highly significant words, "subject to the approval of the Board of Governors."

It was evident from this that the doctor had discovered—probably by consulting the regulations of the school—that his authority as headmaster was not so absolute as he had imagined. That is to say, he had discovered that before he could abolish football he would have to lay the matter before the governors and obtain their consent. And, as the chairman of the Board was an old Corinthian and several of the governors had played Rugger or Soccer for their school or "Varsity," the juniors had not the slightest fear that the Board would ever consent to football being abolished.

"The Gander may threaten till he's black in the face," said Tubb, "but we needn't be frightened of his threats. He'll never be allowed to stop us playin' footer; so we've beaten him on that question, just as we beat him on the question of food."

On another question, too, the doctor had to own defeat. He had tried to prevent the match against St. Benedict's on the following Saturday by refusing to allow Philip and

his team to leave by the only possible train.

As we have seen, however, Philip had wired to the captain of St. Benedict's, asking if he and his men would come to Rayton, instead of the Raytonians going to St. Benedict's. And later in the day a reply was received to the effect that the Benedictines were willing to agree to the change, and would arrive at Rayton at a quarter-past two on Saturday afternoon.

In view of all these circumstances, the juniors were naturally in high feather. The doctor had tried to break their spirit and to beat down their opposition, but he had only succeeded in making them more determined than ever to resist his new-fangled fads and cranks. Moreover, the heavy impositions he had given them, and especially his action in stopping their half-holiday leave, had aroused in them a spirit of reckless defiance. They were ripe for anything now.

Tubb, it will be remembered, had proposed that they should all attend the doctor's half-holiday lecture on Wednesday afternoon, and that each of them should take a "pet" of some kind with him. His proposal had met with the enthusiastic approval of the rest of the juniors; and, at a meeting which was held at the conclusion of afternoon school, a plan was drawn up and arrangements were forthwith made for carrying it out.

There is no need to describe these arrangements. It is enough to say that they included a surreptitious visit to the village and a secret expedition to a neighbouring farm. There were many difficulties to be overcome, but they were all successfully surmounted, and by seven o'clock on Wednesday morning all the necessary pets had been collected and had been housed in one of the school outbuildings, there to remain until the hour for action arrived.

On the raised platform at the end of the big school-room sat Dr. Gandy. On the floor of the room were two long rows of forms, arranged, like the pews in a church, on each side of a central aisle. On the forms nearest the platform sat Merrick, the school captain, and about a score of other seniors. The rest of the forms were unoccupied.

Dr. Gandy glanced at his watch and then at the door at the other end of the room. It was three o'clock—the hour at which the lecture was to begin—and not a single junior had yet put in an appearance.

"They mean to defy me again," he muttered to himself. "But I'll show them who is master here! I'll make them come!"

He glanced at Merrick, and was about to request him to go and fetch the juniors, when the door opened and Tubb walked in, dragging after him a full-grown sheep with a garland of paper flowers round its neck and its tail tied up with blue ribbon!

The seniors gazed at the strange spectacle in horrified amazement. Such daring took their breath away. One or two of them giggled, but the rest were too scared to utter a sound. As for the doctor—well, he nearly had a fit!

"Tubb!" he thundered, in a voice that shook with rage. "What is the explanation of this insolent folly? How dare you bring that animal here?"

"Please, sir, it's my pet," said Tubb, seating himself on one of the forms, and putting one arm around

the sheep's neck. "You advised us to start keepin' pets, sir, and I've started with this sheep. It's so fond of me already that it wouldn't leave me, so I had to bring it with me to your lecture."

He had scarcely finished speaking ere a loud quacking was heard outside the door, and the next moment Philip walked in with a big fat duck under his arm.

Close on his heels came Holcroft, driving a pig, and after him came Ridden with a sheep-dog. Cyrus came next, leading a goat, followed by Carfax with a cat, and Rutherford with a speckled hen.

For the moment rage held the doctor speechless. He seemed to be absolutely paralysed with fury, and could only sit and watch the juniors, one after the other, file into the room, each of them bringing a pet with him, and each of them quietly taking his seat on one of the forms.

Several of them brought cocks and hens, some brought geese, and Card arrived with a talking parrot he had borrowed from Jeremiah Wragg.

At first, as already stated, the seniors had been too scared to laugh. As junior after junior entered the room, however, each with his pet, the humour of the scene proved irresistible, and a roar of uncontrollable laughter burst from the seniors.

"Ha, ha! Ho, ho! He, he!" mocked the parrot. "What a day we're having—I don't think! Wha-at?"

This effort on the parrot's part seemed to fire the rest of the pets with emulation. The sheep began to bleat, the duck to quack, the cocks to crow, the pig to grunt, and the dog to bark. The din was indescribable. It was pandemonium let loose.

At last the doctor found his tongue. Storming and raving like a madman, he sprang down from the platform and rushed to that end of the room where the juniors and their pets were assembled.

"Now, we sha'n't be long!" squawked the parrot, flapping his wings and crowing like a cock.

Then, for the first time, he suddenly caught sight of the cat, which was sitting on Carfax's knee.

"S-s-s! Cats!" whistled the parrot.

The dog, which was squatting at Ridden's feet, instantly sprang up, and made a dash for the cat. Spitting and swearing, the cat made a wild leap through the air, and landed on the doctor's shoulder.

Thrown off his balance, the doctor staggered back, stumbled over the pig, and would have fallen but for the fact that the goat, breaking away from Cyrus, rose up on its hind legs, butted the doctor in the small of the back, and propelled him violently forward into the arms of Holcroft, who was sitting at the end of one of the forms.

Needless to say, Holcroft instantly fell backward off the form, with the doctor on top of him, and all the juniors who were sitting on it.

And when Mr. Walker—who happened to be passing at the time—and heard the crash—ran into the room to see what was the matter, he found Dr. Gandy sprawling on the floor, buried beneath a heap of struggling juniors, with birds and animals scampering about the room in all directions, and with the parrot hanging head downwards from one of the beams of the roof, and bawling lustily for the police!

(Another grand instalment next Tuesday.)

HOW A NEWSPAPER IS RUN.

An Article to Interest Readers of "Chris of the Camera."

AS I have passed through the streets of our various crowded cities and towns on Saturday nights, and seen my chums under the lampposts eagerly devouring the football and other news in the late editions, I have often wondered how many of them realise what a tremendous amount of work has to be done before the paper is produced.

Let us suppose we are going to be present at the birth of a new morning or evening paper. For months before the first copy sees the light of day keen brains and thoughtful minds have been busy mapping out the thousand-and-one details associated with the enterprise.

It is useless to think about starting a paper unless you have plenty of capital. These are days of keen competition, when a perfect newspaper can be bought for a halfpenny, and consequently, unless the capital runs into hundreds of thousands of pounds, the new paper will not have a very long life.

After the preliminaries as to capital and plant have been arranged, the proprietors must have everything in readiness to give to the world on a certain date news from the uttermost corners of the earth in a concise, interesting, and entertaining form.

Efforts must be made to be first in the field with news of

a great disaster at home or abroad, a big murder trial, a great football match, a horse race, a swimming or rowing contest, or other sporting event.

The staff, from the editor-in-chief down to the little "printer's devil" at 5s. a week, is always an important matter. Usually there is an editor-in-chief, who takes the sole responsibility for everything that appears in the paper. Now, suppose something improper is published about a great murder case before the man accused of the crime has been tried, and this is held to be contempt of court. If the judges decide that the case is too serious to be met by a fine, it is the

editor who has to go to prison, although he may not have seen the offending paragraph.

He may get as salary anything from £500 to £5,000 a year.

Under him will be an assistant-editor, a news editor—one who looks after the news, and gives the reporters their orders—a picture or art editor, the editor of the magazine page, sub-editors, who lick the news and articles into shape, reporters, who may be dispatched to any part of the country at a moment's notice, and special correspondents, whose work being of a special character is paid for at high rates.

On the commercial side there must be a general manager, travellers, men who look after the sales, and a large staff of clerks.

An experienced printer will be responsible for bringing in a number of compositors who set up type by hand from cases, or work one of those wonderful linotype machines.

The stereotyper, with a specially-selected staff of his own, makes the type into metal plates, which are placed on cylinders on the huge machines capable of turning out

thousands upon thousands of copies an hour, and which are

looked after by skilled mechanics, who understand every nut, cog, bolt, piston, and rod of the mighty monsters.

A publisher directs the work of a large number of men who make up the papers into parcels ready for despatching by train, tram, tube, cart, motor-car, or by hand to all parts of the compass.

Paper must be bought in the cheapest market by the mile, ink, thick black sticky stuff, very different to that we use for writing, by the ton, whilst, going back to the editorial department for a moment, we find that a local correspondent, who is willing to supply the paper with news, and get paid according to the amount published, has been appointed in every town of importance.

Arrangements have been made, too, with the great agencies which supply news for a fixed sum yearly.

The news from some of these agencies is delivered by hand, written on very thin sheets of paper known as "flimsy," whilst from others it comes through a tape machine—a wonderful contrivance in a glass case, which prints the news on long strips of paper known as tape, which office

boys take off and paste up on slips paper ready for the sub-editors.

Then there are telephones—over which a great deal of news comes—to instal, and an arrangement must be made with the Post Office to have a telegraphic address and the use of

telegraph franks—little vouchers which the reporter puts on his telegrams instead of paying spot cash.

The title of the paper, too, must have been entered at Stationers' Hall and registered at the General Post Office as a newspaper, so that it can be sent by post for a halfpenny.

And at last the great day of publication dawns—the day fraught with so much importance to the men who have been giving their whole attention to the new venture—proprietors, managers, editors, sub-editors, reporters, special correspondents, publishers, clerks, canvassers, compositors, stereotypers, mechanics, electricians, circulation agents, office-boys, and even "printer's angels."

Yet, despite all this trouble, you get the complete article for a ha'penny!

THE END.

A Grand New Serial, by Patrick Morris, Coming Soon in THE BOYS' FRIEND.



YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

I want all my boys to look upon me, as their firm friend and adviser. There are few men who know boys as well as I do, and there are no little trials and troubles, perplexities and anxieties, in which I cannot help and assist my readers.

Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. Tell me about yourself; let me know what you think of THE BOYS' FRIEND. All boys who write to me, and who enclose a stamped envelope or postcard, may be sure of receiving a prompt and kindly reply.

All Letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND, 23, Boulevard Street, London, E.C.

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PATRICK MORRIS'S NEW SERIAL

THIS week I have much pleasure in announcing to my friends that Mr. Patrick Morris is hard at work upon a superb new serial for THE BOYS' FRIEND, a story that promises to be even better than his famous "Railway Waif," and "Hidden Millions."

At present I have not been able to definitely fix upon the date when this tale will commence, but the long opening instalment will certainly appear in our pages in the course of the next few weeks. "A Champion of the Ring" is the title of this grand serial, and obviously it is a story of the boxing ring, not a namby-pamby narrative, but a stirring, gripping story of a lad's uphill fight for full championship honours.

And by a strange coincidence I have this week received some letters from my boys regarding boxing—an art that is becoming increasingly popular—which I will now proceed to deal with.

BOXING AND RELIGION.

Some of my young friends in Norwich belong to a Bible-class connected with the Methodist body in that city, and they are desirous of meeting together once a fortnight for the purpose of learning the art of self-defence. But unfortunately, although they have approached the head of affairs for his consent, he objects, and his contention is that boxing would not be conducive to the welfare of the Bible-class in particular and Christianity in general, and might lead to rowdiness and so forth.

I must say frankly that I do not agree; I cannot see any sound reason why a man cannot be a good Christian and a good boxer, any more than why a man should not be a good Christian and a good rider of horses, or a good swimmer, or a good cricketer, and I am sure if my young friends put to the head of affairs the proposition: "Is it possible for a good Christian to be a good cricketer, and if this be so, then why is it impossible for him to be a good boxer?" he will have a great deal of difficulty in answering the question.

If the head of affairs knew anything about boxing he would know that the better the boxer the less is he inclined to enter into personal dispute, for the simple reason that his knowledge of the art of self-defence, and the possession of the power to be able to punish efficiently, is a great moral restrainer.

Boxing is one of those sports which not only develops muscle, giving one a healthy body—this being conducive to a healthy mind, which is an absolute essential to a Christian—but it teaches one lessons of self-restraint, it teaches one to be quick and active, and is in every way a desirable sport. Because it has been made the subject of professionalism it does not follow that it is therefore wrong, nor does it follow because boxing exhibitions for money are given that a Christian cannot learn the secrets of this art without demoralising himself.

I cannot for the life of me see why a Christian should not indulge in boxing exercises, no more, as I have said, than I can see why he should not take up cycling, rowing, running, swimming, fishing, shooting, or any other sport. It all depends on the purpose for which he intends to use his skill, and, as I say, I cannot see that a man can be one whit less a good, sterling, devout Christian because he possesses the knowledge

of how to defend himself against the attack of another person, and is placed by that knowledge in the position to punish some ruffian who might assail him or his friends.

There is no question about one thing—that the cleverer the boxer, as a general rule, the more modest the man, and the more restrained.

Curiously enough, the very next letter I take up comes from Edward S., of Bushey, who says that his mother does not approve of boxing, because, she says, it is brutal.

Now, boxing is emphatically not a brutal sport. It is manly and vigorous, calculated to bring out the best qualities that are in a man, and I think that every mother ought to encourage her boys to learn boxing. It keeps them in good physical condition, and the very need for that physical condition prevents them from falling into bad habits of any kind, so that every sensible mother who wants to possess healthy, manly sons, should encourage them to go in for boxing.

A WARNING TO R. A.

One of my friends, who lives in South-East London, has a great chum, whose initials are R. A. Now R. A., who is the very best chum my correspondent ever had, and of whom he is very, very fond, has lately developed somewhat unpleasant manners, and my young friend puts it down to the fact that R. A. has taken to gambling. He knows that recently, although he is supposed to be a strong-minded chap, R. A. has been induced by some of his workmates to gamble, and the other day he lost 10s. in less than half an hour.

This is pretty fast going, I should say, and I should think the result will be that R. A. will have to go on short rations. But there is another unpleasant result which may follow—he may be tempted to borrow, in the hope of gambling and being able to recover his losses. And this is where I come in, because I want to have a straight word or two with R. A.

I know a number of boys who have been foolish enough to gamble, either with cards, at pitch-and-toss, or even by backing horses. It is the silliest game in the world, believe me, and particularly you, R. A., I want you to listen to what I have to say. What I am telling you is the truth, real solid truth, and for your benefit alone.

The extraordinary thing about gambling is that nearly everyone who does it loses, and I will tell you why. If a man gambles and wins, he spends his winnings very freely, and in a much more reckless fashion than he would money which he has earned by hard bodily labour; and when he loses he has to go on short commons, so that anyway he gets nothing out of it, because he has to go short when he loses, and he flings it away when he wins.

And that is not the only thing. Gambling is a silly game for any lads starting out in life. There is really nothing in it, it does not lead to anything; all one gets out of it is an excitement very temporary and very fleeting, and when it is over, and you have lost, you could kick yourself for having been such a fool as to gamble. If you win, as a rule, it is only some trifle which does not really satisfy you, and you go and throw it away in some extravagant fashion.

I hope R. A. will listen to me, and as no doubt he is strong-minded in most things, I hope he will say to his chums when next they ask him to gamble. "No, thanks; I have finished! It isn't good enough." They may laugh, and he will be a really sensible lad if he lets them laugh, and laughs in return. Once

he has said "No," he will find it awfully easy to say "No" a second time; then he will have demonstrated something which is far more valuable to him than the possible shilling or two he might win by gambling, and that is that he is master of himself—and very few boys can make that claim and justify it.

R. A. will find a very solid source of satisfaction in the knowledge that he is able to say "No; I am not going to do this thing," and to stick to that determination, to know that he is absolutely master of himself, able to control his wishes and desires in a sensible, level-headed fashion. I hope that this advice to him will be read by other lads who gamble, which is really not a bit of use, and only leads to trouble and dissatisfaction.

A LAD IN DIFFICULTIES.

One of my friends finds himself in trouble. Here is what he has to say:

"I am now almost seventeen, and an apprentice blacksmith. I have been at the trade almost a year now, and know about as much about it at the present time as I did when I started. The boss is a pig, and works like a horse all day, and expects us to do the same, and we will not do it. He is such a sweet-tempered fellow that if I make the least mistake he curses and swears at me like a trooper. I am sick of it, and I can be spoken for in a factory, but as dad is pals with my boss he does not like the idea of me leaving him, but he does not know his two-sided nature. What would you advise me to do?"

"Before I finish I must add success to the good old Green 'Un. Its stories are simply spiffing!"

"Your faithful reader,
"BLACKSMITH."

I admit that the situation for my reader is slightly complicated, owing to the fact that his father is a friend of the man to whom he is apprenticed. If the facts are as "Blacksmith" says, and he is not learning the trade, then I think he ought to take his father into his confidence, tell him the exact situation, and abide by his advice.

After all, hard-working men like to have hard-working assistants, and my young friend should not be too much "downed" by having to work hard. Frankly, I can tell him it is a very useful experience, and won't hurt him. All the same, I don't approve of his employer cursing and swearing at him. This is not the proper thing for any employer to do. It shows bad temper and want of self-control—two things which a master should never display.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR CARDS.

If anyone needed evidence of the extreme popularity of THE BOYS' FRIEND, and I think I may say, without seeming to blow my own trumpet too much of my own favoured position in the hearts of my readers, they should have seen the enormous batches of Christmas and New Year cards that reached me.

They came from all parts, not only of the United Kingdom, but of the entire British world. I do not think there was a single Colony from which I did not receive a tribute, and in most cases the cards were accompanied by letters full of good cheer and hearty wishes.

And now I am taking the opportunity of thaking each one of my chums for this expression of their cordial sympathy with THE BOYS' FRIEND and its aims and objects. I only wish I could thank the senders of these greetings personally, but my

thanks are none the less sincere because they can only be expressed in cold type.

Through the agency of THE BOYS' FRIEND, my readers, my artists, my authors, my staff, and myself are linked together by a unique bond of good fellowship, and the happy family of THE BOYS' FRIEND is one that is ever increasing.

OUR PICTURE PALACE COUPONS.

As you will see, the list of picture-theatres ready to accept THE BOYS' FRIEND half-price coupons is increasing week by week, and thousands of my friends must have reaped benefit from this excellent plan. I hope the list will continue to grow, and that my boys will avail themselves of the privilege.

J. E. C., of Feltham, is very interested in the practical side of picture-theatres, and asks me to explain how the pictures are taken, and whether the actors and actresses who appear in them are really living people or not.

In reply to my chum I will try to explain clearly exactly how a cinematograph film is produced, and as I have myself seen a good deal of the work actually done, I feel quite competent of tackling the task.

The first step is, of course, to get the germ, or idea, for the film. Many people may supply this germ—operators, managers, clerks, and so on. Story-writers, experienced in weaving yarns, often supply the first notion for a film.

With this germ to work upon, the story is gradually built up, and is then taken in hand by a person known as the stage-manager, for all makers of cinematograph films have private theatres where stories can be acted in dumb-show for the purposes of the photographer. For this step in the development of the film expensive scenery and properties have to be made for indoor scenes, and where an outdoor setting is required, arrangements have to be made for the use of a place suited to the story.

When all the scenery and setting has been arranged, there come rehearsals, followed by the actual performance of the story by living players, during which each act is photographed by a camera that takes photographs at an amazing rate.

The next step is to link together the sections, develop the photographs, and then to make the films, which are then secured together so as to form a running story, in which form it is shown at the picture palaces.

A WOULD-BE ROVER.

B. P., a London chum of mine, writes me partly to tell me how truly delighted he was with our Christmas Number, and partly to ask for my advice. He writes a capital letter, straight to the point, just the kind of missive I like to receive.

"For some two years," he writes, "I have had the spirit in me to want to get out in the world. Do you think I ought to cultivate it? At present I am clerk to a stockbroker, and, as far as I can see, am getting on quite well; but as soon as I hear of anyone out in Australia, say, I begin to envy them, and want more than ever to go abroad and try my luck."

My dear B. P., you are just one of thousands of young Britishers born with a love of adventure and a craving for travel. It is our birth-right, and because our forefathers were born with this spirit, we are today the largest nation in the world, for the brave men who sought adventure—the merchant adventurers, as they were called—were the men who gave us our many Colonies.

I admire the spirit, B. P., and if you take it in the right way, you will glory in it. Beyond that, however, I do not advise you to go. It is hard for me to give this advice, for no one loves adventure more than I. At the same time, if you are to get on in the world, to attain position, to go forward, I am afraid you will not achieve your object by accepting a roving commission and going abroad.

Generally speaking, it is the rover who gets the most enjoyable time, but you want to remember that the stay-at-home, the young man who attends to his business, and works hard to earn real, solid success, is the one who climbs the higher on life's ladder.

Stay with your present employer, as you are getting on so well, B. P., and when you are older, and have progressed still further, I am sure you will be grateful for this advice.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

BOXING NOTES.

By J. G. B. LYNCH.

Important Rules.

AS in every other sport, there are certain fixed rules in boxing, but besides these there are certain customs or forms of etiquette to be observed which are quite as important.

First of all these is shaking hands. You should always give your opponent a hearty handgrip before and after even an ordinary practice bout, but especially should this be done at competitions.

Each boxer approaches the centre of the ring from his own corner. They extend their right feet and shake hands, then throw their right leg back behind the left in order to bring themselves into the proper position.

Then, again, they should shake hands before the last round, which, in the case of amateur competitions, is only the third, and when the decision has been given the winner should step across the ring to his opponent's corner and perform the friendly ceremony there.

This is all as a mark that the contest or practice spar is on the friendliest terms. But unfortunately this good old custom is often abused.

A boxer will advance across the ring to shake hands with his opponent, who, taking advantage of his being unprepared, will just touch his hand with his right, and then promptly let fly with his left.

Naturally this, although within the "letter of the law," is an unsportsmanlike action of the worst sort. That is why the custom now is to "shake" with the right foot forward, so as to be able to swing back out of reach at once.

Unfortunately, many people who box are

not good sportsmen,

and are content so long as they obey the literal meaning of the rules, having no regard to their spirit. Thus, when a man is knocked down every boxer knows that he must not touch him, and by "down" is meant when hands, knees, or elbows are on the floor, or when the boxer is in a sitting position.

The absolutely fair sportsman immediately steps well back to the farthest side of the ring in order to give his antagonist a good chance of getting up again, and does not attempt to hit until he is standing firmly once more.

On the other hand, a boxer ready to take advantage of his opponent's plight, will stand as near him while he tries to rise as the referee will allow, and strike him immediately he rises from the floor. This is naturally just a point of honour, and it should carefully be observed when you happen to knock your man down without knocking him quite "out."

The same unwritten rule applies when your opponent has backed up against the ropes and you have pinned him there. So long as he is standing up straight you can, of course, hit him as you please, but directly his back is bent over the ropes you should stop until he gets into an upright position again.

With regard to being knocked down yourself, remember that the boxing rules allow you ten seconds in which to get up, after which time, if you fail, you are said to be "counted out" and beaten.

Very often it happens that you receive a blow when you are badly balanced on your feet, which, though it sends you to the floor, does you no damage whatever. In that case, though by the rules you are entitled to stay down, you should jump up at once, as otherwise it is taking

an unfair advantage

of your opponent by gaining time through your own fault.

Of course, when you go to the floor without receiving any blow at all you are breaking the rules, and if the referee notices you are liable to be disqualified at once, and not be allowed to box any more.

All the same, it is sometimes very difficult for the referee to see whether a blow has been struck or not, and therefore often unfair advantage is taken by a boxer who thinks he will just have a rest.

The great thing is always to box, whether with strangers or chance acquaintances, as though they were your greatest friends. Then you will not want to have any better chance of winning than your opponent.

(Another of these splendid boxing articles next Tuesday in THE BOYS' FRIEND.)

Have You Used Our Picture Theatre Coupons?

The List of Theatres where these Coupons are accepted grows bigger every week.

THE TERROR OF THE DORMITORY.

A Glorious Complete Story of the Boy Ventriloquist.

The Haunted Dormitory.

PROBABLY the most miserable time of a schoolboy's life is his first night at a boarding-school, for all is new and strange, and unless he is fortunate enough to have friends amongst the old boys, he seems a stranger in a new world.

The above refers to the ordinary, everyday boy; but Paul Verely, the Boy Ventriloquist, was not an ordinary boy, as readers of THE BOYS' FRIEND have probably realised by this time.

It is true, regrets for the delights of home weighed down his spirits, but Paul Verely was a true sportsman, who took things as they came, and made the best of it.

It was half-term at Bloxam Hall, "Dr. Winderphelp's College for the Sons of the Nobility and Gentry," as his prospectus duly set forth. It was also Paul Verely's first night at that seat of learning.

We will not inquire into the reason why sweet little Paul—as those who did not know him very well were wont to call him—had changed schools in the middle of a term; it may have been that his parents had been asked to remove him from the school at which he had been until a week or so before. Possibly it was so, for Paul had a way of making his presence felt which many head-masters did not always appreciate.

Anyhow, here he was at Bloxam Hall, sitting up in bed, and looking round him with an air of guileless innocence that made half the boys present long to punch his head.

Dick Forsdyke, of the Fifth, especially, looked at Verely in disgust. "It's no good, we can't do it," he declared, addressing the room in general.

"Can't do what, you old goat?" asked Tom Hammond, his chum, from the opposite end of the room.

"We can't live up to that," declared Dick, shooting out an accusing finger at Paul. "He is too bright, too beautiful, for Dormitory T. He makes me feel such an earthbound clod. What did you say your name was, young 'un?" he asked, turning to Paul.

"Paul Verely, if you please, sir," replied the Boy Ventriloquist politely. Dick Forsdyke uttered a yell, and clasped his hands over his ears in pretended dismay.

"Did you hear him? He called me, sir!" he gasped, after a moment's shuddering silence. "Somebody bring a stake, not the eatable variety, a wooden one, I mean, and a few faggots; our dear little Paul is so sweet, so gentle, so good, he longs for martyrdom—and he shall have it."

"He shall!" cried the boys in one voice.

Springing from their beds, they had just moved towards Paul, who, his hands clasped over his upraised knees, was regarding them with an unnaturally sweet smile, when from the door of the dormitory came the harsh voice of Dr. Winderphelps, crying angrily: "What's the meaning of this unseemly behaviour? Back to your beds! Let each boy bring me fifty lines of Virgil in the morning."

As the first sound of that dread voice fell on their ears, the boys tumbled into their beds more swiftly than they had tumbled out of them, the majority drawing the clothes over their heads in a vain hope that the doctor would believe them to be asleep. All but Tom Hammond, and he sat on the side of his bed, gazing with staring, incredulous eyes, at the closed door.

Presently Dick Forsdyke thrust his head cautiously above the clothes, and, seeing his chum still gazing at the door, asked:

"Is he gone, old chap?"

"Yes," drawled Tom slowly—"that is to say, if you can call a man gone who has never been here."

"What do you mean?" demanded a boy on Tom's right. "Didn't you hear the Head's melodious voice showering impositions broadcast?"

Tom nodded gloomily. "All the same, the door hasn't been opened, and the doctor didn't enter the room," he asserted doggedly.

"Rot!" came from every boy except one, and he substituted an "a" for the "o," and adding an "s," uttered an emphatic "Rats!"

"You can believe me or not, as you like," growled Tom, almost sullenly. "No one entered the room just now."

"Then he roared at us through the keyhole," laughed Dick Forsdyke incredulously, which drew from the other boys a chorus of:

"Oh, if I caught him bending!" "At any rate, he gave us the lines! There was no deception about them—there never is, worse luck, and I'll take care that he has them!" moaned Dick.

"So will I!" came from every bed except Paul Verely's, who had lain down, and was apparently dropping into a sweet, childlike slumber.

"Our sweet little friend is asleep," said Dick, after a time, looking at Paul Verely. "No matter. He will be with us to cheer our hearts on the morrow. I prophesy that there is a lively, and, let us hope, improving time in store for our dear little friend. Now let Billy, our budding author, sing us, or, rather, talk us, to sleep," he added, throwing a boot, by way of emphasising his request, at a boy with a vivid imagination, who occupied the proud, though at times unpleasant, position of story-teller in chief to Dormitory T.

"All right," agreed Billy. "What shall it be—a ghost tale?"

"Oh, bother ghosts!" growled Tom Hammond, who had not quite got over the strange appearance, or, rather, non-appearance of Dr. Winderphelps. "Let us have another of those highwaymen yarns, like the one you spun last night. Only try not to wed the dashing highwayman to the maiden of his choice five minutes after he has been stretched on the lonely heath with the sheriff's broad sword plunged to the hilt in his heart. Somehow or other little things like that spoil the air of reality which should adorn a really good tale."

"I didn't do anything of the kind," growled Billy sulkily. "It was the wicked sheriff who was killed."

"If I remember rightly, that poor, long-suffering gentleman was languishing in prison for having robbed his nephew, a virtuous highwayman, of his inheritance," laughed Dick.

Billy flung himself angrily back on the pillow.

"I'll never tell another tale as long as I live! You chaps only rot me!" came from beneath the clothes.

"Dry up, Tom!" ordered Dick, throwing a pillow at the head of the too critical Hammond. "Come on, Billy, weave your web of tales of daring do; Tom was only rotting."

For some minutes Billy refused to be soothed, but Dick's eloquence prevailed, and, sitting up in bed, he commenced.

"It was a wild and stormy night, and the wind shrieked as though ridden by a thousand fiends over Hounslow—What's that?"

The reciter paused, and looked in alarm about him, for from one end of the whitewashed ceiling to the other had sped a weird, long-drawn, fearful shriek.

Every boy looked in amazement at the ceiling, but no further sound arising to chill their hearts, Billy continued, and, warming to his tale, soon brought his hero to the foot of a lonely gallows, where an old-time comrade was swinging in the wind.

"Suddenly our hero started," continued Billy. "Brave though he was, a shudder shook his frame as, from the fearful form above his head, arose a peal of wild, mad, demoniacal laughter—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

Again the listeners rose from their beds as a peal of ghostly laughter came from the right corner of the room.

"Shut up, Tomkins!" shouted Dick, wondering apprehensively whether the boys would detect the slight tremor which he could not quite withhold from his voice.

"I—I never spoke! It came from the ceiling," stammered the accused one.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

A shudder, as though an icy wind had passed down the dormitory, shook every boyish frame, for the fearful laughter had descended from somewhere just above the T-shaped gas-burners in the centre of the room.

"I say!" roared Tom Hammond. "Who's acting the giddy goat?"

"Giddy goat! Giddy goat!" came in a sepulchral echo from so close behind him that with a wild yell, the boy sprang from his bed and gazed with white, scared face around him.

A deep silence, broken only by the heavy breathing of the startled boys, obtained throughout the dormitory. But nothing further happened to alarm them, and, casting frightened glances over their shoulders, they were allowing their heads to sink back on their pillows, when the hollow, mirthless laughter, which had turned the blood within their veins to ice shortly before, rang out once more, followed by the awful words:

"Gore! Give me gore—glasses of it—jugs of it—pailfuls of it—casks of it—hogsheds of it! Young, rich, red, ripe gore, fresh from juvenile veins. G-r-r-r!"

The fearful voice ended in an inexpressibly horrible growl, and the next moment, led by the imaginative one whose tale had apparently summoned a peculiarly malignant spirit from the vast deep, or some other unpleasant spot, the boys dashed wildly from the dormitory.

For a minute the doorway was blocked with a mob of fiercely fighting, wild-eyed, white-faced, night-gowned boys, then they burst head-over-heels on to the corridor without, and Dormitory T was deserted—deserted, that is to say, by all save Paul Verely, who, as the tail of the last boy's nightshirt disappeared through the doorway, assumed his favourite attitude with his hands clasped around his knees, and, smiling sweetly to himself, awaited the return of the terror-stricken boys.

In the meantime, aroused from his reading by a rush of feet and the yells of the alarmed boys, Mr. Snodery, the science-master, emerged from his study, which opened on to the same corridor, and gazed in

amazement at the crowd of terror-stricken boys.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he cried, his voice rising with each repetition of the word. "What's the meaning of this? How dare you boys leave your dormitory after 'Lights out'?"

A loud chorus of explanation, of which Mr. Snodery could only catch the words "ghosts," "groans," and "haunted," assailed his ears.

"Goodness me, are you all gone mad? Here Forsdyke, you're the oldest, what does it all mean?"

Somewhat ashamed at the panic into which the fearful manifestations had thrown him, Forsdyke gave as coherent an explanation as he could of their fearful experiences that night.

"Indigestion!" declared the science-master decisively. "That's what it is. Though that twenty-seven boys should be subjected to that unpleasant complaint at once is, to say the least of it, rather strange."

"No, sir, it wasn't indigestion," expostulated Tom Hammond indignantly. "I heard the words as plain as I hear you speaking now."

"A hundred lines for contradicting me, Hammond!" thundered the master. "If I say it was indigestion, it was indigestion! Now, get back to bed, and let me hear no more of this folly!"

But not a boy moved; many of them were at that moment relating their awful experience to boys from the adjoining dormitory, who had come out to discover the meaning of the disturbance.

Mr. Snodery glared fiercely at the boys of Dormitory T.

"Now, boys, are you going back to bed, or shall I send for some of the boys from the First Form in the lower school to take care of you?" he demanded sarcastically.

Dick Forsdyke and his companions of Dormitory T flushed beneath the insult; then all clenched their fists and gazed angrily at the boys of the other dormitory, who, not having heard the dreadful voice themselves, were rather inclined to sneer at their schoolfellows' fears.

"It's all very well standing there grinning like a set of bleary-eyed owls!" he snorted, sweeping angry eyes over the laughing boys. "But you haven't gone through our experience to-night, or you'd be about twice as frightened as we are. If you don't believe us, come and see, or rather, listen, for yourselves."

As Dick spoke he wheeled round on his heels, and retraced his way to Dormitory T, his room-mates on his heels, Mr. Snodery following, and a crowd of excited boys in their night attire bringing up the rear.

As they crossed the threshold a gasp of astonishment burst from Dick Forsdyke's lips as he saw Paul Verely seated calmly in his bed, a look of mild surprise on his naturally pale face.

"Good gracious, youngster, have you stuck it all the time?" he demanded. "Didn't you hear anything?"

The expression of amused amazement that Paul Verely forced into his face would have deceived a judge. "You don't mean to say you were

frightened by a little thing like that?" he asked, in accents to suit his expression. "I thought everybody knew that ghosts were impalpable shadows, quite unable to do human beings any harm, and only able to frighten weak-minded cowards!"

Twenty-seven pairs of fists were clenched, and twenty-seven pairs of eyes looked vengefully upon the sweet-faced boy.

"There, lads; there's an example of courage and common-sense for you!" burst in Mr. Snodery, pointing admiringly at Paul. "This small, delicate boy has more courage than the whole of you put together. Although, of course, what he says about ghosts is all nonsense."

"Then you don't believe in ghosts, sir?" asked Paul, elevating his eyebrows.

"Certainly not. As a man of science, I only believe what I can see or feel," was the decided reply.

"Or hear?" queried Paul Verely, with his head interrogatively on one side.

"Hum—well, yes—perhaps hear," admitted the science-master.

The next moment he sprang on one side quicker than he had moved for many a day, for apparently from some unseen creature or being, perched on his shoulder, had come a low, deep, awe-inspiring groan, followed, as he marked his shin against a bedstead, and sprawled in spread-eagle fashion over the coverlet, by loud, nerve-racking peals of unearthly laughter.

The next moment the master regained his feet, and was looking fearfully around him, wondering where the boys of Dormitory T and the other boys had gone to, for the hollow groan had been too much for their strained nerves, and bursting from the room, the boys from the other dormitories had rushed back to their own rooms, whilst the T-ites had dived with one accord under their various beds.

For a moment Mr. Snodery looked at Paul Verely, the only boy in sight. "Didn't you hear anything?" he demanded, for so far from being frightened, Paul appeared to be, as indeed he was, in the seventh heaven of delight.

"Yes, sir; at least, I thought I did. But, as you say there's no such thing as ghosts, I must have been mistaken—don't you think so, sir?" asked Paul, gazing innocently into the master's face.

"No—that is to say, yes, my boy," stammered the bewildered master. "I don't think I will stop here any longer. Tell the boys to be good and go to sleep." And, scarce knowing what he said, for he had had the shock of his life, the master groped his way to the door.

Suddenly Mr. Snodery came to an abrupt halt, gazing with starting eyeballs into the empty space between himself and the open door.

"I beg your pardon!" escaped involuntarily from his lips.

"I said back, mortal. Don't dare to advance another foot, lest a fearful fate overwhelm you! Myself and a choice band of spirits are standing betwixt yourself and the doorway. If we are but thin air, we do not like human beings passing through us—it tickles."

"It tickles—it tickles—it tickles!" came in ghostly assent from right and left of the voice.

Mr. Snodery stepped backwards a couple of paces, then his retreat was brought to an abrupt halt by the mysterious voice demanding his name.

The alarmed science-master stammered out a reply.

"Snodery!" almost shrieked the voice. "Snodery! Brothers, the descendant of our deadly foe has been delivered into our hands! This is Snodery, he whose great-great-great-grandfather hounded us to our doom."

"Seize him!" "Tear him!" "Bite him!"

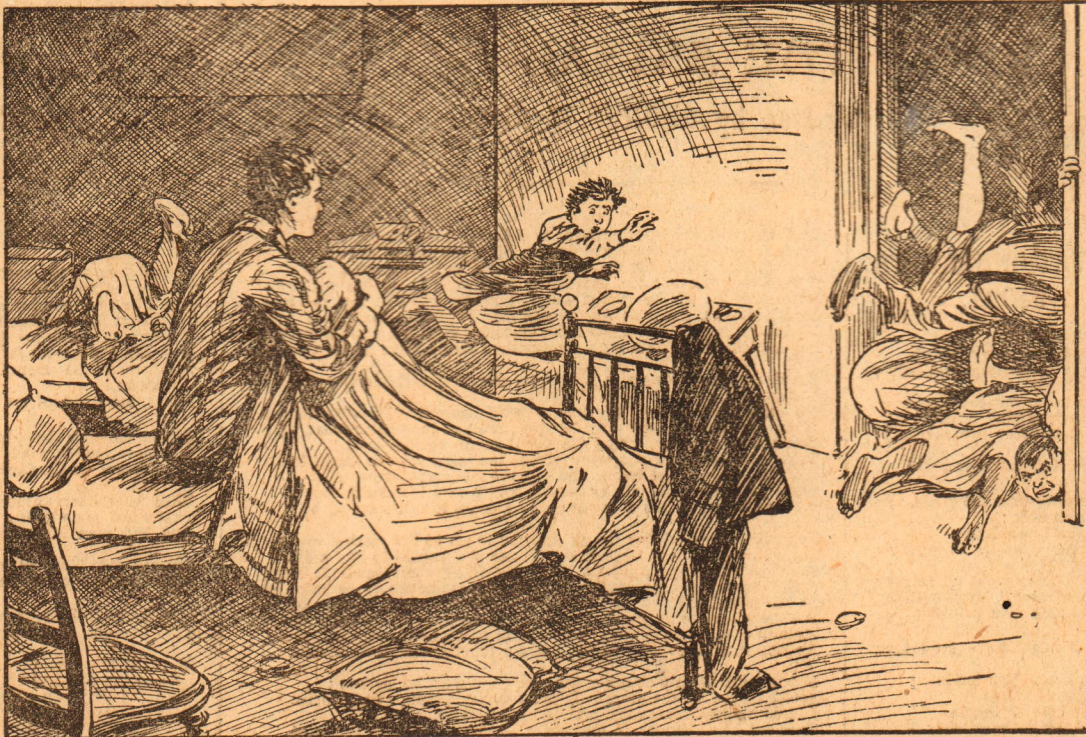
"Pinch him!" came from a dozen parts of the room.

Mr. Snodery stood for a moment paralysed with terror, then, whirling swiftly round, dived headlong beneath the nearest bed.

As it happened, Billy the Story-teller, had taken refuge under this bed. Quaking with fear, he had listened to the ghostly voices, when a dark form appeared by his side, and what sounded in the boy's ears like a malignant yell, clawed viciously at his nightgowned form.

Even a worm will turn, and the most timid become dangerous if cornered. Believing himself in the grasp of a malignant spirit, Billy fought desperately. Luck guiding

(Continued on the next page.)



The doorway was blocked with a mob of fiercely fighting, wild-eyed, white-faced boys. Dormitory T was deserted—deserted by all save Paul Verely, who assumed his favourite attitude with his hands clasped around his knees, and smiled sweetly to himself.

The Terror of the Dormitory

(Continued from the previous page.)

his wild blows, he struck Mr. Snodery on the point of his venerable nose.

Quite believing that Billy was one of the spirits who had threatened such unpleasant consequences to the great-great-grandson of some unknown Snodery, the science-master fought wildly to escape. Thus fighting, the two rolled from under the bed just as Dr. Winderphelps, holding a bedroom candle above his head, strode into the dormitory.

Chance had given Billy a temporary advantage, and kneeling on the science-master's chest, he was performing a kind of postman's knock on that gentleman's classic features, when he heard a voice, which sounded nearly as terrible as the spirit one had done, ordering him to desist.

He obeyed, and, as the Indians say, "his heart turned to water," when he discovered that he had been viciously hammering the science-master.

"Has Faunton gone mad?" asked the doctor, gazing at the second-master, and a number of the elder boys, who were close behind him.

"Has the whole room gone mad?" he added, as a score of white faces were popped out from under the beds. There was no reply, for Mr. Snodery, who had scrambled to his feet, was busily engaged staunching the blood which had flowed from his injured nose.

"Here, boy, you seem to be the only one who's got your wits about you, what, in the name of all that's wonderful, has happened?" demanded the doctor, turning to the Boy Ventriloquist.

Thus abjured, Paul Verely explained, or rather pretended to explain, for when, threatening punishment on all the boys, the doctor strode from the room, he was very little wiser than when he entered it. Nor was it until some time afterwards, when Paul Verely's ventriloquial powers were discovered, that the mystery was explained.

Dr. Winderphelps was also somewhat astounded the following evening when twenty-six impositions, which he had never inflicted, were brought to him by all the boys of Dormitory T, except Paul Verely.

THE END.

(A grand, short, complete story, entitled, "In Peril of the Ice," will appear next Tuesday in THE BOYS' FRIEND.)

CONJURING UP-TO-DATE.

Some Splendid New Hints Clearly Explained for the Beginner.

Introduction.

I SHOULD now like to give a few hints about the arrangement of a programme.

You should always start off with those tricks that are easy to perform, and finish with those which are a little more difficult, but which have a more startling effect. The reason for this is twofold. First, the performer will naturally feel a little nervous during his first few moments on the stage, and would then be more likely to bungle over a difficult feat than towards the end of his programme, when he would have recovered from his nervousness and got his audience in hand; and secondly, the audience, if they have been gradually led up and prepared during the first part of the programme, will be willing to accept almost any possible announcement on the part of the performer, which they would otherwise have scoffed at.

Introductory Speech.

The opening speech should be short, witty, and straight to the point. This may be safely left to the performer, who should include one or two local or topical remarks to suit the occasion. During this time he should turn back his sleeves and arrange his tables, etc., which should have been placed on the stage prior to his entry.

The first trick I intend describing may be entitled "The Wand and Envelope Trick."

Time occupied: About five minutes. Effect: Performer exhibits two long envelopes of different colours, as well as his wand. On taking them back he requests the audience to choose one of the envelopes. Having made their choice, he inserts the wand in this envelope, and lays it on the table or chair on one side of the stage. The empty envelope he places on the other side of the stage. He then commands the wand to travel from one envelope to the other, and on going to the envelope which originally contained the wand, he screws it up, thereby proving its emptiness, while he hands the other envelope to a spectator, who removes the wand.

Requisites and Preparations.

Two paper envelopes about an inch longer than the wand, and one inch wide, made of different coloured paper; a black paper shell to fit over the wand, which should be made an exact copy of it by covering each end with silver paper to represent the ferrules, and

plugging one end with a short piece of wood. This shell should be a good fit, but not tight enough to prevent the wand sliding out when inverted. A little French-chalk placed on the wand will make it slip all the easier.

Presentation of Trick.

Hand the envelopes to a spectator for examination; pick up the wand (covered by the shell), and carelessly rap it on a chair to prove its solidity. At the same time call attention to this fact, and offer to rap any person's head who may doubt its genuineness. Taking the envelopes back, you offer to show that the wand just fits inside of each. In the last envelope the wand should be left behind, and only the shell withdrawn, the audience, of course, remaining in ignorance of this, as they still see the shell in the performer's hand. He then asks them to make their choice of envelopes; whichever they choose, it does not matter, for, supposing the envelopes are red and blue, and the wand happens to be in the red one, if they choose this one, he says, "Very well; I'll cause the wand to pass into the red one!" at the same time placing the shell in the blue one.

If they choose the blue one, he picks it up, and places the shell inside. The trick is now accomplished. It only remains, after a little business, to crush up the envelope which the audience imagines contains the wand, but which in reality only contains the shell, and then hand the envelope which they imagine empty to a spectator to remove the solid wand.

Another effective wand experiment is the following:

The Magnetic Wand.

Time occupied: Five minutes. Effect: Performer freely exhibits his wand, and also calls attention to the fact that his hands are not prepared in any way. Laying the wand on a table, he makes a few "passes" over it in order to magnetise it. After one or two more or less successful attempts the wand adheres in any position to either of his hands, after which both his hands and the wand may be freely examined.

Preparations: The whole secret lies in the use of a loop of fine black silk thread about eighteen inches long, one end of which should be threaded through the bottom button-hole of the waistcoat and the other tucked in the waistcoat-pocket till required.

Presentation: After exhibiting the

wand, return to the stage, and when your back is towards the audience pull the thread out of your pocket and slip wand through loop. Then lay the wand on a table, and bending over it, so as to leave the thread slack, make a few passes over wand, pretending to mesmerise same. Now place finger-tips just behind the wand, and slowly draw back body. This will cause wand, as the thread tightens up, to roll towards the fingers, as though they were attracting it. The wand may be raised by the finger-tips, and as long as you keep the thread tight by pressing the wand away from the body, it will adhere to any part of the hand. Use the finest black silk thread, and at a few yards this will be invisible.

New Ping-Pong Ball Trick.

Effect: Performer brings forward two balls—one red and the other blue—and also a tin tube about 9 inches long, and just large enough for the balls to drop through. He then asks the spectators to mark the balls and examine the tube, and also invites two persons in the audience, seated a few yards apart, to hold up their handkerchiefs by the four corners so as to form a kind of bag.

Performer then takes one of the balls and drops it through tube, to prove that it passes freely through. He then inserts one end of tube into handkerchief held by spectator No. 1 and drops in the red ball, giving spectator No. 2 the blue ball in the same way. Then he commands the balls to exchange places, and upon the handkerchief being opened, this is found to have taken place, the balls bearing the marks that were placed on them.

Secret: Three balls are used—one red and two blue, one of the latter being vested. The tin tube has a slight dent near the centre—even if noticed, this will be passed over by the audience as the result of an accident—so that when a ball is dropped in, it gets jammed, and if the tube is then inverted and another ball dropped in, this ball dislodges the ball that was first dropped in and then remains in itself.

After the tube has been examined, the performer secretly drops in vested (blue) ball, and taking the marked blue ball from audience, apparently drops it through tube. Really the marked ball is retained, and the other blue ball drops out. Then, taking red ball, he pretends to drop it into handkerchief No. 1. Of course, the blue ball drops into this handkerchief, while the red ball remains in the tube. Then, taking the blue ball, he apparently drops this into handkerchief No. 2. Really, the ball goes in, and the blue ball remains in the tube.

(To be continued next Tuesday.)

THE RULES OF FOOTBALL.

HOW many custodians make the mistake of running with the ball? It may look very tricky, but the following law makes it illegal:

The goalkeeper may, within his own half of the field of play, use his hands, but shall not carry the ball. He shall not be charged except when he is holding the ball or obstructing an opponent, or when he has passed outside the goal area.

Comment: The goalkeeper may be charged during the game, but notice of such charge must be given to the referee. If a goalkeeper has been changed without the referee being notified, and

the new goalkeeper

handles the ball within the penalty area, a penalty-kick must be awarded.

Neither tripping, kicking, nor jumping at a player shall be allowed. With the exception of the goalkeeper, a player shall not intentionally handle the ball, nor use his hands to hold or push an opponent. Charging is permissible, but it must not be violent or dangerous, and a player must not be charged from behind unless he is intentionally obstructing an opponent.

Comment: When these infringements are held by the referee to be unintentional, no penalty-kick shall be awarded.

When a free kick has been awarded, the kicker's opponents shall not approach within six yards of the ball unless they are standing on their own goal-line. The ball must at least be rolled over before it shall be considered played—that is, it must make a complete circuit, or travel the distance of its circumference. The

kicker shall not play the ball

a second time until it has been played by another player. Corner-kicks and goal-kicks are free kicks within the meaning of this law.

A goal may be scored from a free kick which is awarded because of any infringement of the law relating to tripping, kicking, jumping at an opponent, etc.

You would naturally think that when playing football you could wear any footwear you liked, but other people have to be considered, and the next law in the list decrees:

A player shall not wear any nails, except such as have their heads driven in flush with the leather, or metal plates, or projections, or gutta-percha on his boots or on his shinguards. If bars or studs on the soles or heels of the boot are used, they shall not project more than half an inch, and shall have all their fastenings driven in flush with the leather. (Another of these helpful articles next Tuesday in THE BOYS' FRIEND.)



A STATIONMASTER'S STORY.

YES, it's a quiet station, but it suits me well enough. I want a bit of the smooth now, for I've had my share o' rough. This berth that the company gave me, they gave as the work was light; I was never fit for the signals after one awful night. I'd been in the box from a youngster, and I'd never felt the strain of the lives at my right hand's mercy in every passing train; one day there was something happened, and it made my nerves go queer. And it's all through that as you find me the stationmaster here.

I was on at the box down yonder—that's where we turn the Mails, And Specials and fast Expresses, on to the centre rails; The side's for the other traffic—the luggage and local slows— It was rare hard work at Christmas, when double the traffic grows. I've been in the box down yonder nigh sixteen hours a day, Till my eyes grew dim and heavy, and my thoughts went all astray; But I've worked the points half-sleeping—and once I slept outright, Till the roar of the Limited woke me, and I nearly died with fright.

Then I thought of the lives in peril, and what might have been their fate Had I sprung to the points that evening a tenth of a tick too late; And a cold and ghastly shiver ran icily through my frame As I fancied the public clamour, the trial, and bitter shame. I could see the bloody wreckage—I could see the mangled slain— And the picture was seared for ever, blood-red, on my heated brain. That moment my nerve was shattered, for I couldn't shut out the thought Of the lives I held in my keeping and the ruin that might be wrought.

That night in our little cottage, as I kissed our sleeping child. My wife looked up from her sewing, and told me, as she smiled, That Johnny had made his mind up—he'd be a pointsman too—" He says when he's big, like daddy, he'll work in the box with you." I frowned, for my heart was heavy, and my wife she saw the look; Lord bless you, my little Alice could read me like a book! I'd to tell her of what had happened, and I said that I must leave. For a pointsman's arm ain't trusty when terror lurks in his sleeve.

But she cheered me up in a minute, and that night, ere we went to sleep, She made me give her a promise, which I swore that I'd always keep. It was always to do my duty. "Do that, and then come what will, You'll have no worry," said Alice, "if things go well or ill; There's something that always tells us the thing that we ought to do." My wife was a bit religious, and in with the chapel crew. But I knew she was talking reason, and I says to myself, says I, "I won't give in like a coward—it's a scare that'll soon go by."

Now, the very next day the missus had to go to the market town— She'd the Christmas things to see to, and she wanted to buy a gown. She'd be gone for a spell for the Parly didn't come back till eight, And I knew, on a Christmas Eve, too, the trains would be extra late. So she settled to leave me Johnny, and then she could turn the key— For she'd have some parcels to carry, and the boy would be safe with me. He was five, was our little Johnny, and quiet, and nice, and good— He was mad to go with daddy, and I'd often promised he should.

It was noon when missus started—her train went by my box; She could see, as she passed my window, her darling's curly locks. I lifted him up to mammy, and he kissed his little hand. Then sat, like a mouse, in the corner, and thought it was fairland. But somehow I fell a-thinking of a scene that would not fade— Of how I had slept on duty, until I grew afraid; For the thought would weigh upon me one day I might come to lie In a felon's cell for the slaughter for those I had doomed to die.

The fit that come upon me, like a hideous nightmare seemed, Till I rubbed my eyes and started like a sleeper who has dreamed. For a time the box had vanished—I'd worked like a mere machine— My mind had been on the wander, and I'd neither heard nor seen. With a start I thought of Johnny, and I turned the boy to seek; Then I uttered a groan of anguish, for my lips refused to speak. There had flashed such a scene of horror swift on my startled sight That it curdled my blood in terror and sent my red lips white.

It was all in one awful moment—I saw that the boy was lost; He had gone for a toy, I fancied, some child from a train had tossed; The Local was easing slowly, to stop at the station here, And the Limited Mail was coming, and I had the line to clear. I could hear the roar of the engine, I could almost feel its breath, And right on the centre metals stood my boy in the jaws of death! On came the fierce fiend, tearing straight for the centre line, And the hand that must wreck or save it, O merciful God, was mine!

'Twas a hundred lives or Johnny's. O Heaven, what could I do? Up to God's ear that moment a wild, fierce question flew; "What shall I do, O Heaven?" And sudden and loud and clear On the wind came the words, "Your duty," borne to my listening ear. Then I set my teeth, and my breathing was fierce and short and quick. "My boy!" I cried, but he heard not; and then I went blind and sick.

The hot black smoke of the engine came with a rush before I turned the Mail to the centre, and by it flew with a roar.

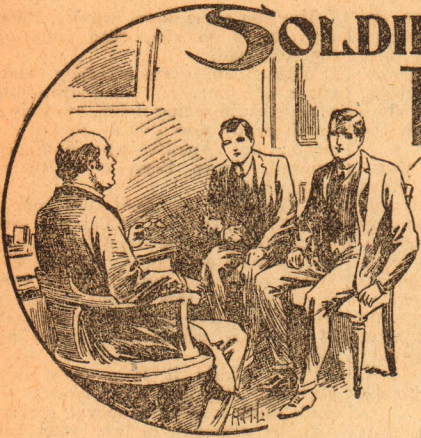
Then I sank on my knees in horror, and hid my ashen face— I had given my child to Heaven—his life was a hundred's grace. Had I held my hand a moment I had hurled the flying Mail To shatter the creeping Local that stood on the other rail! Where is my boy—my darling? O God, let me hide my eyes! How can I look—his father—on that which there mangled lies? That voice! O merciful Heaven, 'tis the child's, and he calls my name! I hear, but I cannot see him, for my eyes are filled with flame.

I knew no more that night, sir, for I fell as I heard the boy; The place reeled round, and I fainted—swooned with the sudden joy. But I heard on the Christmas morning, when I woke in my own warm bed, With Alice's arms around me, and a strange, wild dream in my head, That she'd come by the early Local, being anxious about the lad, And had seen him there on the metals, and the sight nigh drove her mad. She had seen him just as the engine of the Limited closed my view, And she'd leapt on the line and saved him just as the mail dashed through.

She was back in the train in a second, and both were safe and sound— The moment they stopped at the station she ran here, and I was found With my eyes like a madman's glaring, and my face a ghastly white— I heard the boy, and I fainted, and I hadn't my wits that night. Who told me to do my duty? What voice was that on the wind? Was it fancy that brought it to me, or were there God's lips behind? If I hadn't a-done my duty—had I ventured to disobey, My bonnie boy and his mother might have died by my hand that day!

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SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE.

A Superb New Serial,
Specially Written for THE
BOYS' FRIEND by that
Well-known Globe-trotter
and Author, STANLEY
PORTAL HYATT.

JUST TO INTRODUCE TO YOU

Dudley and Marcus Scarfield, who are travelling northwards in Africa on the track of Mr. Douglas, a hunter, who is beyond the pale of civilisation, and who holds the papers referring to an invaluable invention his father has left to them.

By getting these papers they become immensely rich, whilst if they fail to recover them they will remain poor, so that they are straining every nerve to reach their father's old friend.

Joseph Scarfield is their cousin, who by fair means or foul is also trying to find Douglas. Up to the present he has mostly employed foul means—in fact, he

leaves no stone unturned

to gain his ends.

Amous is a native who has attached himself to the brothers, and he is a friend indeed.

Travelling with a prospector, the boys reach Fort Busi, where they have a terrible encounter with Matabele savages and Trek Boers who are making an attack upon the British fort. When at last the battle on the veldt is over, and the savages and Boers retire, Dudley and Marcus proceed on their journey, and reaching another lonely station, find that Joseph is still leading in the great race to reach Douglas first. Feeling confident, however, that their cousin cannot pass through the treacherous country on horseback, the boys spend a little time in exploring

a mysterious tunnel.

They find the mouth of the tunnel, which the superstitious negroes say is guarded by "The Death That Spits," and proceeding into the darkness with lighted torches, they suddenly come to an abrupt halt.

"I don't know—," Marcus begins; then suddenly he puts his hands to his eyes. "Oh, oh!" he cries. "What was that hit me?"

(Now read the splendid chapters below.)

In the Tunnel of the Lizard.

A MOMENT later Dudley had also dropped his candle, and was trying to rub something, which burned like acid, out of his eyes.

Marcus had gone down on his knees, and was fumbling for his handkerchief.

"It has blinded me!" he moaned. "Oh, the pain of it! Dudley, help me out of this horrible place!"

"It has blinded me, too," Dudley answered. There was something very like despair in his voice.

For a moment the two boys crouched where they had dropped their candles, vainly trying to clear their eyes of that horrible fluid; but their lids seemed to be swelling every second, until the eyes were entirely closed.

They were now on what seemed to be a level part of the tunnel, a fact which made matters very much worse, for they were no longer sure in which direction to crawl in order to reach the open air again.

"Dudley," Marcus whispered, after a while, "what was it?"

"It must be the 'Death That Spits,'" the elder brother answered; then he endeavoured to pull himself together. "Marcus, we must get out of this somehow. Let's crawl along to the open. I'm sure it's in this direction." He bumped his head against the side of the tunnel, showing how little he really knew about the matter. He turned half round, then started again, this time more cautiously. "Marcus, follow me," he cried. "You can hear my voice. I'm sure this is the way!"

His brother answered, though his voice seemed a curiously long way off; then Dudley went forward, feeling his way very carefully, but certain that he was going up a slope all the time. Every now and then he called out, and each time mistook the curious echo of the tunnel for Marcus's answer.

At last a sudden freshness in the air told him he was near the surface again. He drew a deep sigh of relief. Blind though he might be, something was better than that horrible tunnel, and "The Death That Spits."

A minute later, his eyes, totally closed though they were, told him that he was in the daylight. He stood up and faced round.

"Marcus," he cried, "I'm out of it now. Are you far behind?"

He waited for an answer, but none came; then he called again and again, wildly at last, but still there was no reply from the tunnel. He had left his brother behind in that horrible place!

His first idea was to turn back, and he took a few steps in the direction in which he now supposed the entrance to be; but he caught his foot in a clump of grass and fell heavily. He got up again, and made another attempt, only to blunder into the face of the rock. Twice more he tried, then he gave it up. His hands were both bleeding, and he had taken a great piece of skin off one knee.

He sat down in utter despair. He could do nothing to help his brother, nothing to help himself.

Would Kerridge or Amous ever find him? Would they suspect the mad errand on which the brothers had gone?

Suddenly, he thought of his rifle, which he had brought out of the tunnel with him, but had dropped when he fell over the clump of grass. If he could find that he could signal for help. Once more he went down on his hands and knees and crawled over the ground very carefully, backwards and forwards, again and again, but all to no effect. His last chance seemed to have gone.

"I wonder where those boys can have got to?" Kerridge remarked for the tenth time that morning.

Mackay, the trader, shook his head.

"Gone out to try and get a buck, I expect," he answered, "though I could have told them that the niggers have netted all the bush for miles round here. It's about their only occupation. The women have to do all the work, as usual, in Africa." He knocked the ashes out of his pipe viciously. "The more you see of these Makalanga, the more you hate them, eh? I don't believe they have a single interest in life beyond witchcraft, and, perhaps, Kaffir beer."

Kerridge smiled sarcastically.

"Why not civilise them?"

"Civilise them!" There was a world of scorn in Mackay's voice. "Do you suppose that by teaching a nigger his A B C, and the First Book of Euclid, you make him forget how to poison or stab his neighbour?"

"They say it does," Kerridge answered gravely, though there was a twinkle in his eye.

The trader got up suddenly.

"Look here, Sam Kerridge, you and I have been over twenty years in this forsaken country—the best years of our lives. Did you ever know a civilised nigger outside the Basuto? Of course you didn't, and you never will. Did you ever see a good nigger?"

The prospector laughed grimly.

"Yes; I saw about two hundred good Matabele outside Fort Busi the other day, when the Maxim gun and Khama's people had done their work."

"I didn't mean dead niggers—we know they're good," the trader retorted. "I only wish people who write books about Africa would tell the truth—tell them at home that the real nigger is not a hero with a feather headdress, waving a spear and singing a war-song, but usually a dirty old man, crouching over a smoky fire, plotting to poison his neighbour. So far, these boys have seen the fighting nigger, but now they'll see the other sort. The warriors have a chance only now and then; the poisoners go on all the time, killing twenty for every one the

warriors kill. They write about the Zulu." He spat disgustedly at a lizard which was sunning itself on a rock. "The Zulu! A boasting, bragging, useless, drunken lot! The Basuto have always been able to walk through them. At home they have been told that the Zulu is a fine man mentally and physically. Yet he is perfectly incapable of learning a trade, and the bigger he gets the weaker he seems to become. The Zulu of the novelists! Bah!"

"That's all right, Mac," Kerridge broke in. "You've got it off your chest now, and I agree with every word. But the point is, where are those boys? Have you seen anything of Baas Marcus or Baas Dudley?"

He turned to Amous, who had just strolled in, carrying half a dozen freshly-killed guinea-fowl.

The Basuto shook his head. "No, baas; they were here when I went out, cleaning their rifles. Then I heard Baas Marcus ask that dirty savage"—he pointed to the cook-boy—"for some candles."

"Candles!" Kerridge echoed.

"What should he want candles for?"

Amous shook his head, but a light broke on Mackay suddenly.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "I know! You remember my story of the tunnel in the kopjes, and 'The Death That Spits'? They have gone to look for that."

The Basuto's eyes had opened very wide.

"Baas, surely they haven't gone there—surely not? It is a fiend, indeed, that thing! I know it of old."

Mackay nodded, whilst Kerridge hurried off to fetch his own rifle.

"I'm sure that's where they've gone."

"Wait a moment, baas," Amous said, as Kerridge hurried back from the hut. "There is something we want to take with us."

He went to his own bundle of kit, and returned quickly, one of his pockets bulging.

Mackay had also fetched his rifle, and the two white men and the Basuto set out. Before long, they struck the spoor of the boys where they had crossed a muddy brook; then they found it again at the foot of the kopje, and, after that, it was only a question of minutes before they came on Dudley, squatting just beside the entrance to the tunnel. The rifle, which he had vainly tried to find, was within a foot of him, having slipped into a crevice of the rocks.

He heard them coming, and gave a cry of relief.

"Thank Heaven you have come—thank Heaven! But Marcus is still in the tunnel, and he's blinded, like me, unless that 'The Death That Spits' has not killed him."

The white men hurried to him, exchanging glances of dismay; but after one look at his eyes, Amous turned back and went down the kopje side, scanning the vegetation with great care. Presently he gave a little grunt of satisfaction, and pounced on a certain small shrub, off which he pulled a large handful of light green leaves. He chewed some of these up in his mouth as he climbed the kopje again.

Kerridge and Mackay had begun to bandage the boy's eyes with a handkerchief, but the Basuto bade them stop.

"I have the medicine for that, baas," he said. "We shall be in time even now. Soon he will see again." And he plastered the green pulp on the swollen lids.

Dudley gave a little sigh. "That cools them," he said; then, a minute later: "It has taken the pain away," he added.

Amous removed the first lot of pulp, very gently, and applied some more.

"Now you might bandage over that, baas," he said to Kerridge. "Then put him in the shade of that boulder."

They made Dudley as comfortable as possible in the circumstances, with Mackay's coat under his head; then they withdrew a little, and held a whispered conference. Amous explained something in a few words, obviously to the astonishment of the white men.

"I never thought of that," Mackay exclaimed. "By Jove, it is simple enough!"

"When you know it," Kerridge remarked grimly. "Well, now, how about Baas Marcus, Amous? He is still in there."

"I think he is probably dead," the Basuto answered very quietly. "He must have turned the other way, and that thing would have killed him. Still, one can but see."

He produced a candle from his pocket, lighted it, and entered the mouth of the tunnel.

Kerridge tried to pull him back.

"Don't be a fool, Amous," he said. "There's no use in your getting killed, too."

"That's all right, baas," the other answered cheerfully. "I'm not going down to where that schelm is. I only want to watch how the candle burns. See." He pointed to the flame.

"There is a draught upwards, so there must be another entrance to the tunnel. We should find that now."

They left Dudley in the shade of the boulder. He seemed inclined to sleep, as though there was some narcotic property in Amous's leaves, and then they made their way to the other kopje, where the tunnel was supposed to come out.

"I never heard anyone mention the other end," Mackay said. "I don't see how we're going to find it."

Kerridge, however, as an old prospector, had a good knowledge of mining work, and he could guess fairly accurately, where the other opening should be.

"Supposing the dip is continued," he said, "and the tunnel runs straight, it will come out at the very foot of that kopje, almost in that little river itself."

"There is no opening there," Mackay answered positively. "I've been down there after guinea-fowl hundreds of times. It's a sheer waste of time to look there."

They searched the foot of the kopje thoroughly without the slightest result.

"I told you so," Mackay grumbled. "It's no use—"

"Baas, where does this water come from?" Amous interrupted him suddenly.

"That water?" The Basuto was pointing to a tiny stream trickling down the hillside. "I don't know. It's a spring, I suppose."

Amous put his finger in the water, and tasted it; then, without another word, he followed its course up the hillside, going rapidly, almost like a klipspringer.

The white men followed him as quickly as they could, to find him standing in front of a large boulder, from beneath which the water was flowing.

"I'm sure it's the place, baas," he said to Kerridge. "It's the same smell that there was at the other end. Yet I don't see how—"

Then the prospector's technical knowledge came to their aid. He had been looking at the boulder with a puzzled air—it was of an unusual shape, in an unusual position. Suddenly he stepped forward, and gripped one edge of the stone.

"Pull, Amous—pull!" he said.

The Basuto obeyed, wondering, and the rock seemed to give slightly; then Mackay lent his aid, and the rock swung outwards, revealing the other opening of the passage, and Marcus, pallid and sightless, standing ankle-deep in the water.

The Tenant of the Cavern.

AMOUS treated Marcus's eyes as he had treated his brother's, then Kerridge went back to Dudley, whilst Mackay remained to help the Basuto. For once, the native had taken command, because this particular native happened to understand the affair, whilst the others did not.

With the trader's aid, the rock was pushed back into place. It had been hinged in a most ingenious way, the work having been done at some very remote period, as was evident from the surface of the stone.

"Thousands of years old," Mackay said. "The same race which built the old ruins and made the ancient workings did this."

Amous shrugged his shoulders; the ancients did not interest him in the least degree.

"Ja, baas," he answered; "but the Makalanga witch doctors have since made use of it. Now, however, we will see that they use it no longer."

He pulled his knife out of his belt, and, using it as a trowel, began to puddle up the mud beside the stream. In a few minutes he had a large heap of good, stiff clay; then he climbed on the top of the stone and began to caulk the crack round it, practically rendering that end of the tunnel airtight.

He did his job very thoroughly, as was his way with everything, he undertook, and when it was complete he viewed it with great satisfaction.

"There is only the bottom open, baas," he remarked to Mackay—"the place where the water comes out—and that does not matter greatly. Now, if Baas Marcus is better we will go back to the other end."

They untied the bandages over

Marcus's eyes. The swelling had gone down, and though the eyes themselves were still inflamed, the boy could see clearly.

He blinked for a full minute, finding the light strong, then turned to Amous.

"What was it, Amous? What struck us?" he asked.

The Basuto grinned.

"Wait a little, baas. I will show you."

They found Dudley practically right again, though both brothers had been severely shaken by their experience.

"I've done with Kaffir fiends now," Dudley said feelingly. "Treasure, or no treasure, I intend to leave them alone in future."

Amous overheard the words.

"There is treasure there, baas," he remarked quietly—"a great treasure for the Makalanga, though not for the white man."

Then, before they could ask him any questions, he strolled away and squatted down behind a rock.

"I must get ready the medicine for 'The Death That Spits,'" he said.

"It must have been the echo which misled me," Marcus said, in answer to his brother. "I certainly thought I was following you; then I bumped my head against the rock, and I suppose I was unconscious for a time. I must have been so, for I had only just reached that swinging boulder when I heard the voices outside. Probably I should have turned back had I not heard them and groped my way to here somehow."

"Probably you would never have reached here," Kerridge interjected. "Why? You ask why? Wait and see, Marcus. You have had a most amazing escape from death as it is. You may have other adventures, but you will never be nearer death in a more ghastly form than you were to-day."

Both the boys went a little pale, for Kerridge's voice was unusually grave, and they knew him to be a man who never exaggerated anything.

After a while the Basuto came forward, half a dozen dynamite cartridges, with detonators and short lengths of fuse attached, in his hand. He gave three to Kerridge, and kept three himself.

"Throw them as far down the tunnel as you can, baas," he said. Then he took another short length of fuse, lighted that, and from its sparks they lighted the charges.

In rapid succession all six cartridges were flung down the tunnel; then the party made a dash for shelter, and waited for the explosions. Kerridge counted them.

"One, two, three, four, five, six—and that's the lot. Now, you boys, come and watch, and I think we can show you your enemy. Amous and I will be ready to shoot him when he comes out."

The Basuto and the prospector went forward to within a dozen feet of the mouth of the tunnel, where they crouched with their rifles ready, whilst Mackay and the boys stood behind.

The strain on the boys' nerves was no small one, and Marcus found himself clutching his brother's arm and whispering

"What is it, Dudley—what is it?"

A few seconds later the heavy, sickening dynamite smoke began to roll sluggishly out of the tunnel-mouth.

Kerridge and Amous leaned forward eagerly, ready to shoot.

Seconds passed and became a quarter of a minute, half a minute—a half-minute which somehow seemed like a half-hour—and still nothing appeared.

Then suddenly "it" came—a huge, brown snake with a white ring round its neck—a snake which reared up its head furiously, and a moment later was waving a jagged, horrible stump where the head had been, for both Kerridge and Amous had hit it.

The Basuto gave a little cry of triumph and turned to the boys.

"There, Baas Dudley, that is the fiend of the Makalanga—that is 'The Death That Spits.'"

"It was a ringhals," Kerridge explained later—"a ring-necked snake. They can spit at you from thirty feet away, and hit you in the eye every time. Had Amous not treated your eyes when he did you would probably have been permanently blind. I admit I never thought of that explanation of the business until Amous suggested it. The idea of driving him out with dynamite smoke was splendid. Amous tells me he got the cartridges from Captain Railton."

"Does the ringhals only spit?" Dudley asked.

The prospector smiled grimly. "No; he usually stings, and when he stings he always kills you. That was why I said Marcus had had a marvellous escape. I can't imagine even now how he crawled past that snake."

Marcus had gone very cold at the thought of the peril. It seemed even worse than ever, although it was a thing of the past.

"But, still, I don't understand it all," Dudley said. "Mr. Mackay told us it was a witch doctor's affair. What have they to do with the snake?"

"Did you smell anything curious?" Kerridge asked.

Both the boys nodded. "Yes, sulphur," Marcus answered. "That's it!" the prospector went on. "Sulphur is a treasure to the witch doctors—one of their greatest treasures—and there is a sulphur spring in that tunnel. Why is it a treasure?" he laughed. "Because you can't make gunpowder without it. We know the natives make their own powder, and we know where they get their saltpetre—they burn the dung of the rock-rabbit, and extract it from the ashes—but until this morning no white man had the least idea whence their sulphur came. Of course, they had to keep the rest of their people away, so they have encouraged this ringhals to live there. Probably they have fed him regularly, and the witch doctors would not be afraid of him, as they are all inoculated against snake-bite."

"What are you going to do now?" Marcus asked. "I am going to send to Fort Busi for a case of dynamite, and then I shall close both ends of the tunnel. Oh, I know it was made by the ancients thousands of years ago, and that the swinging boulder and all that are very interesting, and should be preserved! But it is not so interesting to have a Makalanga shooting a piece of iron pot-leg at you out of a Tower musket; and he can do that any time, so long as the witch doctors get their sulphur from that spring. That's the way I look at it—eh, Kerridge?"

Face to Face—The Peril of Marcus.

THE runner returned from Fort Busi with the spare inner tubes, for the bicycle on which the boys proposed to continue their journey, and then the little party prepared to start again.

"You will find all your kit at M'Bambo's, thirty miles on," Mackay said. "It will be safe enough. Well, good luck! Don't go looking for any more native fiends, you boys."

Dudley and Marcus laughed. They had got over their shock, and were able to look back calmly at their adventure; but none the less, both had decided not to try any more adventures of that sort. Their main business, the finding of John Douglas, was enough to keep them fully occupied.

The day proved to be a totally uneventful one, unless you count six punctures amongst four machines as events. The path, a well-marked one, worn smooth by the passage of generations of bare feet, led through some splendid scenery—a succession of rugged granite kopjes, some apparently consisting of one immense granite rock, smooth-faced, and bare of vegetation; others just huge piles of boulders, looking as though they had been built up in sport by some vanished race of giants.

The valleys were full of native fields, and what was not field seemed to be needed as pasture-land for the sheep and goats and cattle. Beside the streams were large tobacco-patches, and round each village the most perfect tomatoes grew in wild profusion. Certainly, it was a fair land, from the native point of view.

They picked up their kit at M'Bambo's, slept the night there, then pushed on again towards the Portuguese border.

"We are bound to go far to the east out of our way," Kerridge explained, "because there's a huge dry stretch on the British side, a tract with no trace of a path running across it, whilst there is both a path and waterholes in the Portuguese. If we tried to skirt the dry stretch on the other side, we should probably run into some of those rotten Matabele."

For four days nothing of any importance happened. In most of the villages they struck there was no one who had ever seen a bicycle before, and their arrival caused a temporary

stampede; but there was no hint of hostility.

As a rule, the local headman would hasten down to greet them, and then send his wives for sour milk, and eggs, and meal, as presents for the white chiefs. True, the eggs had always been taken from under a sitting hen, the meal was often mouldy, and the giver expected a far greater present in return; but still, there was a friendly spirit behind it all.

Every day, however, the rate of travel became slower. Villages were fewer, and, consequently, the paths were less used; often for miles they would have to wheel their machines; and, with every trek to the eastward, which meant so many feet nearer sea-level, the heat grew more oppressive.

On the fifth day Kerridge reckoned they had done a bare fifteen miles; at the end of the sixth day he reckoned the trek at ten miles; moreover, the whole party was done up.

That evening the prospector called a council of war.

"It is no use trying to go on like this," he said. "We are simply losing valuable time. We could do much better on foot, with half a dozen carriers. I think we had better abandon my cycle and Amous's here." Amous heaved a sigh of relief. "Fold your cycles up, and get some of the local savages to carry our stuff and your machines along for us."

The boys agreed readily—they had had quite enough of wheeling their machines; then Amous was sent in search of the headman, who proved to be a wizened old skeleton, wrapped in an unutterably filthy blanket, and wearing a string of coarse blue beads round his neck.

"We want carriers—six carriers, N'Jova," Kerridge said.

The headman looked at him with bleary eyes, then took snuff copiously.

At last "The young men are all at work in the fields," he answered. "They cannot leave, or the baboons will eat the crops."

"The crops are not even sown yet, N'Jova. The beer must have been too strong for you to-night," Kerridge retorted.

N'Jova drew his rag of a blanket more closely round himself, and shivered.

"Most of the young men have gone to fight the Matabele," he murmured.

Kerridge knocked the ashes of his pipe out against his boot, and spoke, apparently to Amous.

"What was the name of that Makalanga headman who was hanged for telling lies?"

Amous answered promptly.

"His name was N'Jova; but, baas, they flogged him first. Surely we should do the same with this N'Jova, who is as bad, or even worse?"

The headman gave him an evil look; still, he recognised the weakness of his own position.

"I think they will come back from fighting the Matabele very early to-morrow morning, before the chief is awake. Then I can get the six carriers for the chief."

Amous grinned, and twirled his sjambok expressively; but Kerridge did not even smile.

"So they will be here early to-morrow, N'Jova?" he asked.

The headman nodded.

"Yes, very early, chief."

The following morning, N'Jova received an unexpected present in the shape of two bicycles—those which Amous and Kerridge had been riding. At first he was puzzled to know what to do with them; but the village smith, a grimy old person, with red-ochre rubbed in his wool, and a cat-skin as his whole attire, suggested a solution, and it was not many days before the frames had been converted into knives and assegai blades. The chains, nicely cleaned, formed much-admired ornaments for N'Jova's two principal wives.

Two days later Kerridge sent the carriers home, and engaged a new lot at the kraal where they were spending the night. They had left the granite country behind now, and were well into the bush veldt; another stage, and they would be right into the jungle on the Portuguese side of the border.

There was any quantity of game about, and, consequently, any number of lions. At the village where they got their second lot of carriers, the huts were all built with double walls, in the hope of rendering them lion-proof, whilst the posts of the cattle-kraal were fourteen feet high.

"Man-eating lions are very rare," Kerridge said, in answer to a question from Dudley. "They're always very old brutes, which are no longer able to catch game, so they keep round

the water-holes, and try and get the women. The headman tells me there is one in the neighbourhood now."

It was just about sunset, and Marcus was out with his shot-gun, looking for guinea-fowl, of which there were thousands in the fields. He strolled across the sweet potato patches, through another belt of scrub, and into a second large clearing. As he came out, he gave a sigh of annoyance. Why had he not let a native follow behind with his rifle? There, passing quietly, a bare eighty yards away, was the largest sable antelope bull he had seen, a magnificent animal, as large as a mule, but looking far larger by reason of his great horns and stiff, upstanding mane.

The bull turned his head as he heard Marcus coming, snorted, and pawed the ground. He did not like being disturbed when he was feeding. Kerridge had warned the boys several times about sable antelope, telling them how the sable will often charge when wounded; but this one seemed inclined to charge unwounded. However, a moment later he changed his mind, threw his head back, then galloped off into the bush.

A little further on Marcus saw a flock of guinea-fowl, several hundreds in number. The birds—they are much larger and finer in every way than the so-called guinea-fowl you see in English shops—had just come out of their hiding-place for their evening meal, and were announcing the fact with their rasping voices. Marcus fired into the thick of them right and left, and instantly the whole flock

They stared at him without apparent interest—the dreariness of that low bush veldt seems to have sunk into the very souls of the people there—gave him one dull look, though they had never seen a white man before, then went on with the task of filling the water pots.

Then, without the slightest warning, the lion came. He must have been slinking along but a few yards ahead of Marcus without the boy having the least idea of his presence. Like a flash he sprang out on a young girl who was just going up from the pools, a heavy pot of water balanced on her head. She gave one frenzied shriek as she fell, but after that she never made another sound; then the lion took her in his jaws, and started to drag the body into the scrub.

Marcus had seen it all. It had happened under his very eyes, happened so quickly that he had not had a chance to shoot. The other women had also seen it, and were screaming wildly.

The boy had only a shot-gun, but he did not think of that. All he remembered was the horrible death of the girl, and he started after the lion, mad for revenge.

It was only a question of sprinting a few yards before he came again in sight of the brute, who had flung the body on to his shoulders, and was carrying it that way, holding an arm in his mouth. Quite unconsciously, Marcus yelled to him to stop. It seemed afterwards an absurd thing to have done, but the fact remains



Marcus allowed the lion to get within ten yards and then let go with his right barrel. The brute gave a roar and sprang forward.

was in confusion; but there were four birds jumping up and down, turning the wildest of somersaults. Marcus ran forward, caught them one after another, and wrung their necks; then he squatted down, and proceeded to tie them together with his handkerchief, so that he could carry them over his shoulder, two in front, and two behind.

The sun was already down when the boy had finished slinging his birds, and he decided to go straight back to the village.

"The river is at the end of this field," he muttered. "I'll follow that up to the niggers' water-path. It will probably be the easiest way."

He saw thousands more guinea-fowl along the river-bank, saw a troop of waterbuck break away on the other bank, run a hundred yards, then stand to stare at this strange kind of man; but he fired no more shots, hating useless slaughter. Already he had all the birds they needed for the next day.

The river was the ordinary sandy sluit you get in that dreary bush country. Only after a very heavy rain would you find running water in it; ordinarily, you had to dig a hole several feet deep to procure your water. On the banks was thorn scrub, the eternal mimosa-trees, with a queer, crackling grass between them. As Marcus came along, he saw a dozen of the village women and girls—wild-looking creatures—with loin cloths of coloured calico as their sole attire, and with their heads plastered with red-ochre, scooping water out of the little pools.

that the lion did stop, and faced round, dropping his prey for the moment.

Then it came home to Marcus that he hadn't got a rifle. The range was perhaps twenty-five yards. A shot-gun may kill a small antelope at that distance, but it will only sting a lion, so Marcus held his fire.

The lion seemed to understand that he had this new kind of enemy at his mercy, and came on quite slowly, snarling with rage. Marcus had taken one hurried glance round, but he had been lured into a small olei, and there was not a tree within reach.

He raised his shot-gun, covering his enemy. Oh, if only he had had his rifle! As it was, he had No. 4 shot in his right barrel, No. 3 in his choke barrel.

He thought it was all up; but he did a plucky thing, and the right thing. He let the foul creature—I, who have had years of experience of him, do not hesitate in calling the so-called 'King of Beasts' foul—get within ten yards, then he let rip with his right barrel, hoping to blind the lion, but in that he failed. The brute gave a roar, pain and rage mingled, and sprang forward.

When, and how, he fired his other barrel, Marcus never quite knew. It must have been when the lion was actually in the air, for the charge appeared to have gone upwards, at about ten feet range, tearing the beast's throat to pieces, and at the same moment Marcus must have jumped to one side, for the force of the lion's paw came on the two guinea-fowl slung on his left shoulder.

The lion came down heavily, rolled over, tried to rise, then collapsed inertly, dead.

Within an extraordinarily short space of time, the men from the village came racing down, assegais in hand, ready now doubly to kill the dead; but Amous, who had also arrived, drove them off with no gentle hand.

"The lion is dead, O baboon folk!" he growled. "Yet now you want to spoil the skin by driving your foolish assegais through it. Get away, and send sensible men—men who can skin this schelm. Also, it would be well to carry away the body of that girl, whom the schelm has killed."

"I'm afraid it is a poor skin, Marcus," Kerridge said later. "I don't think it is worth carrying along with us, although he was your first lion. But don't try and tackle a lion with a shot-gun again. Yours is the only case in which I ever heard of the experiment succeeding."

One result of the killing of the man-eater was that they had no more trouble getting carriers. Marcus was a mighty hunter, and it was an honour to serve him; consequently, the following morning, instead of six natives, twenty volunteered for service; but old Kerridge shook his head.

"How should I feed you all?" he asked. "We should feed on the meat which the little chief, Marcus, shot for us," they answered.

Kerridge laughed, but shook his head again.

"No," he answered, "I want six, and six only."

Three days later they crossed the border into Portuguese East Africa, and camped at a village of the type the boys had never seen before. The huts were well built, there was no miscellaneous rubbish lying about, furnishing a breeding-ground for flies, whilst, instead of the ordinary grain-bin—a mud-plastered cylinder, with a dilapidated little thatch over it—the corn was stored in immense wicker-work "bottles," some of them six feet in height and five feet in diameter. The inhabitants, too, were clean, wearing white waistcloths, and, in many cases, white jackets as well.

"They are 'Ma Tehangana,' or 'Shangaan,' as the white men will call them," Kerridge remarked. "The finest natives in South Africa. They broke away from the Zulu about 1825, and came up here under a chief called N'Zamandi."

The Shangaan headman, M'Kupi, was a very dignified old man. He was a chief, and the boys and Kerridge were chiefs; consequently, they could talk together. But he shook his head gravely when he heard what their plans were.

"There is not much water on the path," he said, "and that is bad; but there is something far worse than thirst—the M'Tchopi."

Kerridge frowned. "The M'Tchopi! What are they?" M'Kupi smiled.

"They are the Archers, the Bushmen, who live in the dry stretches. They can go for a month without water, it is said, and they kill all other folk at sight, shooting at them from the tops of trees with poisoned arrows. Ten of my men went along that path last month, and none of them has come back."

The carriers seemed to have heard of the Archers as well, for they were very unwilling to start next morning, but a few touches from Amous' sjambok made them change their minds.

"Oh, you Mahalanga!" the Basuto cried. "You are at best but monkey-folk yourselves, so why should you fear other monkeys? You have assegais; they have bows and arrows—that is the only difference."

M'Kupi had told them that, if they came on the Archers at all, it would be within the next twenty miles. By midday, when they stopped for their lunch, they had done about sixteen miles.

"Luck is with us," Kerridge remarked. "I think we are going to get through safely."

The words were hardly out of his mouth before one of the carriers, who was squatting beside the fire, gave a little cry, and sprang to his feet. Just between his shoulder-blades was a little arrow.

"Oh! Oh!" he cried, and tried to pluck the arrow out; but even as he did so he seemed to choke, and fell forward, dead.

The Archers had found them.

(Another grand instalment of this thrilling adventure serial next Tuesday, in THE BOYS' FRIEND.)

CHRIS OF THE CAMERA.

A Stirring Adventure Serial, Dealing with the Life of a Young Press Photographer.

Written by MALCOLM DAYLE,

Author of that Popular Story, "The Odds Against Him," etc.

THE GIST OF OUR NEW SERIAL.

Christopher Mayne, a young photographer living at Forest Gate, an eastern suburb of London, is out of employment, and by strange good fortune secures an excellent picture of the capture of two anarchists, which he sells as a great scoop to the editor of the "Morning Mercury."

Later Chris receives an appointment on the staff of the "Mercury," owing to the dismissal of another photographer named Parker. The latter becomes most malignant and unable to withstand his insults, Chris strikes him a nasty blow, an act in which he was perfectly justified. Parker, who is now in the employ of the "Daily Herald," threatens to have his revenge upon the boy photographer, and so the two become bitter rivals.

Chris has just obtained a photograph of the Prince of Adolfa's state procession through London, but Parker, coward-like, dashes the negative to the ground. It is too late to obtain another picture, and Chris feels that he has lost his chance, while his rival has got the very picture which he himself wished to secure for the "Morning Mercury."

"What can I do—oh, what can I do!" groans Chris in great distress.

(Now read the splendid chapters below.)

THE 6th CHAPTER.

A Desperate Device—The Rival Papers.

WHAT could he do? The crashing band, the jingle of swords and spurs, and the cheers of the crowd ascending from the street below, mocked him. "You've had your chance," a voice seemed to say harshly in his ear. "You've had your chance and failed!"

Chris drew in his breath sharply as he stooped and picked up the wretched camera. How could he face them at the office? What would Mr. Rolands say when he admitted that not only had he returned without a photograph of the procession, but his camera, the expensive instrument entrusted to his care was damaged almost beyond repair.

Then an idea occurred to him, an idea that staggered and half frightened him for a moment, but the next instant his face flushed with excitement. He stole towards the edge of the parapet, where Parker, the "Herald's" photographer, the man who had treated him so badly, was lying full length, intent on getting a snapshot of the crowd as it surged into the street after the procession had passed.

By his side was the dark slide containing the photograph of the procession.

It was the sight of this dark slide that had given Chris his idea. Parker was working with the same type of camera as himself. The dark slide, which in his hurry he had carelessly placed by his side, was identical with two containing unused plates in Chris's pocket. If only he could obtain that precious slide with the photograph of the procession, and leave in its place the slide he had taken from his pocket.

He hated the idea of doing it; it was a low-down trick. But Parker had deliberately charged him; tried to ruin him on his first important job, and had wrecked his camera.

"It may be stealing," he muttered to himself, "and there may be an awful row, but I don't care; I'm going to take that slide if I can get it."

The people on the roof had either turned to descend to the street, or were staring down at the huge crowd that had just swarmed out into the sanded road in a great swaying, black mass. Parker was intent on his photograph of the scene below.

Stepping very softly, Chris was beside him. In a flash the two dark slides were exchanged, and even as Chris slipped the one containing the photograph of the procession into his pocket, Parker looked up.

"Well, little boy," he jeered, "You'd better run home to mummy, and say how naughty you've been to break your nice camera and not get a solitary picture."

"You cad!" cried Chris. "No one but a mean sneaking hound would have done what you've done. But I shouldn't chuckle so much just yet; those laugh best who laugh last."

"You won't laugh when Rolands has had a heart-to-heart talk with you," sneered the other. "He won't believe your story, and you'll go back to the gutter where you came from."

For a moment Chris was on the point of striking the sallow, taunting face, but he kept himself in hand. This was no time for fighting; he must get back to the "Mercury" office, and develop his, or rather Parker's photo. His clenched fist fell to his side in the act of placing the damaged camera on the ground and engaging in a fight, he turned on his heel, and with a grim smile on his face, descended the many flights of stairs, and found himself in the crowded streets.

He had been told to get back to the office as soon as possible, for the photograph would probably be used on a page that went to press early; and, anyway, the process department would want it early, so as to get clear before the rush that came about nine or ten o'clock.

He jumped into a taxi-cab, and the driver, by going down side streets, landed him at the "Mercury" office a quarter of an hour later, and he went straight to Mr. Rolands' room. The news-editor, glancing up as he entered, stared blankly at the damaged camera that he carried.

"Good heavens, Mayne!" he cried. "Have you had an accident? Don't tell me you haven't got the picture, because I—"

"I've got the photo all right, sir," said Chris; "but I didn't take it myself."

And then he told the astounded man what had happened on the roof of the building.

"Great Scott!" gasped the news-editor. "You'd better come with me and tell your story to Mr. Grant. I don't know whether we ought to use the photograph or not. There'll be the very dickens of a row with the 'Herald' if we do."

He led the way along a corridor, and Chris's heart was beating quickly as he followed him. He was going to see Derrick Grant, the all-powerful editor of the "Mercury," the man who had made it the great paper it was, and whose word was law.

"Come on," said Mr. Rolands, as Chris held back by the door. And the next moment they had both entered the editor's room—a comfortably but plainly-furnished office, where, at a desk close to a cheerful fire, a man was sitting reading the first proof of the second leading article for the next issue.

Chris stood rather awkwardly in the centre of the room, whilst Mr. Rolands talked to the chief in a low voice. Chris saw him glance keenly at him once or twice during the conversation, and presently he said, in a quiet, pleasant voice:

"Come here, Mayne."

"Now," he went on, as Chris stood before his desk, looking straight into the pale, determined face with the keen, restless eyes, "are you prepared to take your oath that the story you have told Mr. Rolands is true in every detail?"

"Yes, sir," said Chris.

"Could you bring witnesses to prove your story?"

"I think so, sir. Several people must have seen what happened. I heard two or three people say 'Shame,' but they were keen on the procession, and I was so dazed at the moment I never thought of asking their names."

"No doubt the names of the people on the roof can be obtained," said Mr. Rolands. "The police were very strict in their regulations as to people witnessing the procession from roofs, and the owners of the building would know the majority of the people present."

The editor leant back in his chair, and remained silent for a moment, then he jumped to his feet.

"By Jove, Rolands, we'll make them sit up!" he cried. "Our next issue will be the sensation of Fleet Street. Have the photo on the front, acknowledge it 'Photograph by the 'Daily Herald,' and on the leader-page have a double-headed par describing what occurred." He

turned to Chris. "Don't think I am encouraging low-down methods," he said. "I would have given pounds rather than this had occurred. But a dastardly, dirty trick was played upon you, and you were justified in what you did. I like to see presence of mind—er—Mayne, and I shall keep my eye upon you."

He nodded dismissal, and Dick followed the news-editor out of the room with a flushed face and sparkling eyes.

As the door closed he heard a faint chuckle from the direction of the editorial chair.

Up in the long room he told Larter what had happened, and that young fellow was furious.

"I half wish I'd killed the beast when I threw him out!" he said. "If you hadn't sneaked his dark slide you'd have been done, Mayne. They wouldn't have taken the trouble to listen to your story. Grant is a fine chap, and the smartest editor in London, but failures are no use to him. A new hand like you would have been fired neck and crop."

"I reckon I've got even with Parker," said Chris grimly, as he went to one of the dark rooms to develop his photo.

"I reckon the 'Herald' people will be up against it in the morning," chuckled the chief of the department as he went back to finish framing up some photos in a fancy scroll for the next day's magazine page. "I'd give five pounds to watch Parker trying to develop an unexposed plate, and wondering what on earth had happened to him."

Chris found the photograph was a good one. He dried the negative, and quickly got off a gaslight print. Then down it went to the editorial offices to be measured up, to come back again to Larter for touching up, with blue-pencil instructions on the back of it, and then off to the process department to be made into a half-tone block—whilst Chris took the damaged camera to the makers to be repaired, and to borrow another; whilst, to all intents and purposes, it was being re-made, the lenses being almost the only part that had been uninjured.

"Photographed by the 'Daily Herald.'"

To the ordinary reader who noticed the words they were slightly puzzling, until he read the boldly displayed paragraph on the leader page of the "Mercury." Then the average reader chuckled, and went off to find a friend to tell him of the neat way the "Mercury" had scored off its rival.

Business men coming to town talked and laughed over it, little knowing how nearly the dastardly act of the "Herald's" photographer had come to ruining a promising career at its very outset. Certainly people said it

was one to the "Mercury," for its rival had nothing approaching such a good picture of the ceremony; in fact, save for a couple of poor photos taken in a bad light at the Guildhall, there was no illustration of the Royal procession.

But in Fleet Street it was not only a good joke, but a great sensation. The editor of the "Herald" came post-haste to his office. Reporters and photographers, gathering in their offices, waiting to be dispatched on their various duties, discussed the situation, and wondered what would happen.

Parker turned up livid with rage. A vague suspicion of what had happened had occurred to him overnight. He had felt fairly certain that Chris was responsible for the substitution of the dark slide with the unexposed plates for that which contained his photograph. But now to have the whole thing made public, to have himself and his paper held up to the ridicule of the whole country, he could scarcely contain himself.

Chris, on arriving at the "Mercury" office, found such of the staff that came on duty early eagerly discussing the situation, and wondering what would happen.

"Keep your eye on Parker," was the advice given to the young Press photographer by many of his comrades.

At ten o'clock Mr. Rolands sent for him, but made no mention of the sensation of the hour.

"Here, Mayne," he said, "cut along to Blackfriars Bridge. A constable has rescued a woman from the Thames. Take a photo of the bridge, and find out the spot where the rescue took place. Find out the constable's name, and track him down, and get his photo. It's not much of a story, but things are dull, and we may need it."

So Chris hurried to the dark-room, got the camera that the makers had lent him whilst his own was being repaired, and hurried off to Blackfriars Bridge. It was nearly one when he returned, for he had had difficulty in tracing the constable, and still more difficulty in persuading the modest officer to pose for his photo.

As he entered the long room where the little Cockney was sitting smoking innumerable cigarettes, and waiting to be despatched if any important news should come in, Mr. Larter came out of his little office.

"There's been a sequel to the sensation, Mayne," he said; "we have had a note round from the 'Herald,' demanding a thousand pounds compensation, an apology, and your dismissal. If we don't agree, they say they will sue us, and prosecute you for theft."

Chris stared at him blankly.

The "Mercury" had done their best for him, but, after all, his enemy was to triumph. Whatever hap-

pened, he was done. If the "Mercury" accepted the "Herald's" terms, he would be dismissed. If they did not, he would be prosecuted as a thief.

"I'd better save people trouble," he said wearily, "and go and give myself up."

"Don't be a young fool," said Larter; "it's only a bluff, and Grant's not the sort of man to be bluffed. As soon as you left him yesterday, he sent a reporter round to the building where the thing occurred, and the man found a couple of people employed in the building who saw the incident, and are prepared to swear that Parker deliberately charged into you just as you were going to take the photo."

"But the 'Herald' may bring other witnesses, and—"

"The 'Herald,' my boy, when they get Grant's note, and see that if there is any fighting to be done, we are quite prepared to fight, will let the matter drop. It will be interesting to see to-morrow's issue."

Chris went to the dark-room to develop his plates with a heavy heart.

Certainly he would breathe more freely when something more definite was known.

THE 7th CHAPTER.

On the Midnight Mail—The Thief

AS Chris came out of the dark-room with the gaslight prints of the photos he had taken, the little Cockney, whose name he had learnt was Brown, and who had the reputation of being one of the "Mercury's" smartest men, came into the room with a disgusted expression on his face.

"Nice thing!" he growled. "Got to go down to some rotten little village in Kent, because there's been a murder that looks like being a big thing. I'd reckoned I was booked for the launchin' of the battleship at Glasgow, to-morrow; instead of that I shall be trampin' through mud and getting chilled to the bone, potterin' round the country. I hate the country in the winter! Who'd be a Press photographer?"

"I'm pretty keen on it," said Chris, with a smile.

"Ah, my lad, you're young, and—but I mustn't stop jawin' here. I've got to rush. Young Escott's goin' with me, and 'e's a chap 'oc would walk the 'ind legs off a donkey."

He disappeared into his dark-room to get his camera and plates, for he had only just come on duty, and Chris took his photographs to Mr. Larter.

"Quite O K," said the busy young gentleman, just glancing at them. "Don't know if they'll be used, though. Rolands' keen on this Kentish murder mystery, and if Brown gets some good stuff, we're going to make a big splash. You'd better go to lunch now, and then get straight away to the wedding at St. George's at half-past two. Just a couple of photos. Bride and bridegroom leaving the church, the crowd outside—you know the sort of thing."

So Chris, with his camera slung on his back, went out, had some lunch, and then went to photograph the society wedding, feeling that for that day, at all events, he had had nothing exciting to do.

But when he got back to the "Mercury" office soon after three, Larter beckoned to him.

"Just develop these plates, and give them to Hobbs to print," said the chief of the department quickly, "and then go home and rest for a bit. Be back here at eleven; Rolands may want you to go to Glasgow to do the launching of the battleship. He's got to wait and see if the chief wants to make a big thing of it. If you go you'll have to catch the midnight mail which leaves Euston at ten to twelve, so you'd better be here by eleven."

Chris developed his photos, handed the plates to a youngster named Hobbs, who did little except print and enlarge the photographs that the men on the staff took, and then with his head in a whirl, and his heart beating wildly, he set off to his humble lodgings.

A trip to Glasgow! And a trip to do important work. He had the longing that possesses most young fellows of his age to see more of the country in which he lived, and the prospect of a long journey right through the heart of England to the Second City of the Empire was a delightful one.

He had difficulty in getting to sleep in his gloomy little bed-room, but he knew that if he was to be fit for his work, he would need rest, and he had been sleeping about four



With one quick glance Chris measured his distance, and even as the constable's hand shot out to seize him, he leapt from the side of the ship out into space, his hands clutching wildly for the yard-arm of the passing vessel.

CHRIS OF THE CAMERA.

(Continued from the previous page.)

hours when at ten o'clock his alarm-clock woke him, and he tumbled out of bed and washed and dressed.

There was something strange about getting up at such a time; he could scarcely realise that it was the same day. The motor-bus that he got to the City was practically empty, though the ones they met were crowded. He was commencing work at the time when the vast majority of men had finished for the day.

Fleet Street was busy enough. Reporters and messengers were hurrying to and fro, and the restaurants were crowded with men, snatching a hasty meal before the real rush of work set in.

Chris, desperately excited, dashed past old Griggs in his little box, and hurried up the stairs to Mr. Larter's office.

"You've to go," said that young gentleman calmly, as though it were a matter of no importance. "We're going to make a front of it, so mind you get good stuff. Here's a five-pound-note for your expenses—you can change it when you get your ticket; and here's the police permit to admit you to the shipbuilding yard. You get to Glasgow about eight, in time to have breakfast, and then get to the yard. The launching is at half-past ten, and you'll have to hustle, for the train back leaves the Central Station at twelve, and if you miss it, we're done. As it is, we shall have a rush to get the blocks made in time."

Chris got his camera, and, with trembling hands, slung it over his back. Now he was on an important job. He was going all the way to Glasgow to photograph the launch of Britain's greatest battleship, the Ever Ready, and his paper was relying on him to get good stuff, and to get back to London in time.

At Euston he changed the five-pound-note, his fare coming to just over three pounds, and then he took his seat in an empty third-class carriage. There were very few passengers that night, and nothing like so much hustle as usual, then at the end of the platform a red light changed to a green one, a whistle shrilled out, and Dick resumed his seat and jerked up the window, as the train with less fuss than many a small local glided gently out into the darkness on its four-hundred-mile journey.

And just as Dick pulled in his head from outside the door-window, a man dashed through the booking-hall and swung himself into the rear guard's van.

It was Parker, the unscrupulous photographer of the "Herald," who had run things close.

It was most unfortunate for Chris Mayne, reading in the carriage he had to himself, a paper he had purchased at the bookstall, and thinking of the great time before him, that he had not seen his rival board the train.

Chris kept awake until the train had stopped at Crewe, where another engine was attached, but soon after it had swayed over the points north of the great junction, he began to feel sleepy. It was a bitterly cold night, and though the carriage was warm enough, he envied those fortunate people in their berths in the sleeping-car, comfortably tucked up between blankets as the train flew on northwards.

"By Jove," he muttered, "I think I'll have a doze, then I'll wake up fresh to see the scenery when it's light!"

He took off his overcoat, and, folding it up, made a pillow for his head.

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and then, stretching himself full length on the seat, he was soon fast asleep.

And about an hour later the "Herald's" photographer, who had been sleeping almost from the moment the train had left Euston, woke up, and, feeling cold and stiff, decided to walk along the corridor, stretch his legs, and have a wash. As he passed through the compartments, he glanced carelessly at the occupants to see if there should be anyone he knew on the train, and then suddenly came to an abrupt halt, and peered furtively up and down the corridor before gently pulling back the door and stepping softly into the carriage that he saw was occupied by his rival, the youngster whom he had tried to ruin, and who had taken such a neat revenge upon him.

"It's my turn now," he muttered. "I'll do the young cub in this time." He bent over the sleeping lad, and his eyes gleamed as he saw a piece of a blue card sticking out of his waistcoat pocket—it was the pass signed by the chief of the police and the manager of the shipbuilding firm, without which no stranger would be allowed near the great battleship.

His fingers went to the card, the train swayed slightly over the points at Preston, and Chris moved uneasily in his sleep. Then Parker heard footsteps coming along the corridor, and his face paled. There was no time to lose; he must gain possession of that all-important card.

With a quick movement, he jerked it away, and stepped out into the corridor, beads of perspiration standing out on his face as a man passed him going back to his carriage. He walked along the corridor, tore the card into small pieces, and, letting down a window, threw it out into the night.

"It's just as well to be rid of the thing, in case of questions," he said to himself. "If he should see me, and cause trouble, they'll only find the pass made out to the 'Herald,' and the young fool will get laughed at."

All the same, he sincerely hoped that Chris would not discover his loss until he had left the train, and determined to keep well out of the youngster's way.

THE 3th CHAPTER.
The Launch—A Terrible Position.

IT was not until nearly seven, when the train was over the border, and rushing on towards Glasgow, that Chris awoke with a start to find the dull grey light of early morning streaming into the carriage. For some moments he lay thinking, wondering where he was, and then it all came to him, and he stumbled to his feet, feeling stiff, cramped, and very hungry.

"Well," he murmured, "I sha'n't be sorry when this journey's over. I think I'll go and have a wash. We're due in Glasgow in an hour, and then, thank goodness, I shall be able to get a decent meal."

He went along the corridor to a lavatory, and the cold water freshened him up considerably. He told himself that the return journey would be more pleasant, for he would have lunch and dinner and also a cup of tea in the train, and for the greater part of the journey it would be daylight, and he would be able to see the country instead of looking out into darkness.

It was with a feeling of great relief that he sprang out of the train at the handsome Central Station, and made his way down the steps into Argyle Street, which was crowded with men and women hurrying to their work. He walked on and found a modest restaurant in Trongate, where he had breakfast, and then, after a stroll round the City, he boarded a Govan tramcar that passed close to the shipbuilding yard, where the Ever Ready was to be launched. It was barely ten o'clock, and he walked leisurely up to the gates where an inspector and two constables of the Glasgow City Police were on duty.

"Ticket, please," said one of the constables, as he reached the gates.

Chris put his hand to his waistcoat pocket, where he knew he had placed the pass that Mr. Larter had given him, then his heart seemed to cease to beat.

He had lost his pass!
"I—I had it!" he gasped to the officer, who was staring at him with some suspicion. "I—but I must have lost it. I—"

"You can't get in without a pass," said the man shortly; "strict orders. Look again, laddie; you may have put it in another pocket."

Mechanically Chris went through his pockets, but he felt that it was a useless proceeding. He distinctly re-

membered placing the blue ticket in his waistcoat pocket, and he felt that it must have fallen out whilst he lay asleep in the carriage.

"What's the trouble?"
The police-inspector had come across.

"I've lost my pass, sir," said Chris; "I must have dropped it in the train. I'm on the staff of the 'Mercury,' and it is most important that I should get the photos; can't you—"

"No, I can't let you in without an order," said the inspector. "I'm sorry for you, but it is your own carelessness. Orders are orders, and have to be obeyed. You'd better clear off; you're causing an obstruction."

Chris turned away sick at heart. He had come this long journey travelling through the night. He had cost his paper a lot of money in fares, and all for nothing. He was done now. There was no excuse for him. By sheer carelessness he had lost his pass; that meant everything to him and to the "Mercury." He must travel back four hundred miles to admit failure.

"Laddie!"
He swung round to find the big constable who had first spoken to him beside him.

"If ye canna get into yon yard," he said quickly, "ye'd best hire one o' the wee boats that are to be got

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by the steps. Ye'll get the picture all right."

Chris gratefully murmured his thanks, and hurried off to the steps leading down to the river that the constable had indicated. What a fool he had been not to think of that before! If only he could get a boat near enough, he should be able to get a good picture of the launching itself at all events, and he must trust to luck as to what he could secure afterwards.

He bargained with an old Scotchman to row him out, and take up a position where he could obtain a photo. The boatman demanded a sovereign, but in the end accepted half that sum for his services, and Chris stepped into the boat, and was rowed out into the middle of the Clyde.

There were a number of boats all round the scene of the launching, but the old man, who knew the river as he knew his own home, manoeuvred his boat into an ideal position, and Chris got out his camera and focused it on the great battleship resting on the slips.

"Keep her as steady as you can, please," he said to the boatman, as he slipped in a dark slide.

"Ay!" said the old man, and with an oar spread out on either side, the boat was almost motionless.

"Click."
Chris had secured a photo of the vessel on the slips, with men moving round her like live ants in a nest making the final preparations.

He took out the dark slide, stuck a piece of stamp-paper on it, and wrote the title on it, and then reversing the slide, replaced it in the camera, and was ready for the photograph of the actual launching.

"There'll be a big wash as she takes the water, laddie," said the old Scotsman; "ye'd best take your

picture as she comes down yon slips, for the boat will be rocking so."

"Thanks," said Chris, as a distant clock struck the half-hour, the time that owing to the state of the tide the ceremony was to be performed.

He raised his camera, and with the hood pulled up to his eyes, stared down at the view-finder, showing the slips standing out like a gaunt, bare forest, with the great battleship amid it.

"Hurrah!"
The wife of a Cabinet Minister had broken a bottle of wine on the bows of the ship, a lever had been pulled, and his Majesty's ship Ever Ready slipped stern first down the slips into the Clyde.

Chris, with his finger on the spring that controlled the shutter, waited until the stern of the great vessel was well into the water, and then took the photo. That it was a good one he had not the slightest doubt, for he had got the great war vessel just as she took the water when the privileged people on the slips were waving their hats in the air and were cheering, when flags were flying in the background, and a band was crashing out the familiar but always heart-stirring strains of "Britannia Rules the Waves."

And as the music died away the great vessel, still a mere hulk on which many months' labour was still needed, swung round and came broadside on to the works instead of blocking up the whole river and stopping the shipping.

Immediately a swarm of boats surrounded her as she towered grimly above, and Chris turned to the boatman, who was staring at him with the curiosity of a man who meets a type that he has never met before.

"Pull me to the ladder there, will you?" he said. "I'm going on board."

The old man looked at him doubtfully.

"I don't reckon they'll let you board her, laddie," he said, "but ye can try."

Chris had seen that a number of people had put off the shore in small boats to view the great vessel, and that several Press photographers were among them, evidently those provided with passes, but he hoped in the rush to get on board with them.

And he succeeded.

As the boat came alongside the companion-ladder he handed the boatman the promised half-sovereign, and jumped up just behind a party of reporters. The officials on duty at the gangway glanced at the first two or three passes, and then did not trouble, and Chris, wedged in between the big reporters, found himself on the deck of the warship, free to take what photographs he liked, and then to hurry back to the Central Station and return to London.

He secured three or four interesting photos, and was about to leave the vessel, when he saw Parker, his rival of the "Herald," duck under the ropes that railed off a hatchway amidships and vanish down a ladder.

He stared blankly ahead of him for a moment astounded at seeing his rival on board. It flashed through him that Parker might be responsible for the disappearance of his pass, which had nearly led to his failure.

"By Jove!" he cried. "I won't let the beggar steal a march on me, if there's anything good to be got down there! The 'Mercury' shall have the photos as well!"

He darted under the ropes, and swinging himself down the ladder, found himself on the lower deck. In the distance he saw Parker, and as he glanced at him there was a low report, a brilliant flash, and he knew that his rival had taken a photograph of the side of the ship by the aid of a patent flashlight apparatus.

"It's no use me stopping here," Chris murmured sadly. "Why on earth didn't I put a flashlight or two in my pocket? Still, I can't see what interest a photo like that would be, so I reckon the 'Herald' are welcome to it."

But Mr. James Parker was not taking that particular photograph for the "Herald," because the "Herald" would never have dared to publish it. The photograph, and a full description of the secret armoury of Britain's greatest Dreadnought was destined for the Chief of the Secret Service in Berlin.

And then as Chris turned away, not wishing to have a row with Parker, especially as he had not a pass to prove his right to be on the ship, the latter saw him, and with a face pale with rage and fear, darted up to him, hastily slipping his camera into its case.

"You little spy!" he cried

hoarsely. "How dare you follow me? You've no pass, you've no—"

"Then it was you who stole it!" cried Chris angrily. "I—"

"What are you two doing down here?"

Both photographers swung round to find themselves confronting an angry policeman.

Chris spoke first. "I'm sorry if I'm trespassing," he said, "but—"

"You knew very well you were trespassing, and"—he sniffed suspiciously around—"one of you must have taken a photo by flashlight. I can smell the fumes. You'll have to come with me to the inspector."

"He has taken a photograph," said Parker swiftly; "I saw him use a flashlight just as I got down here. I'm the photographer from the 'Herald,' and I asked this fellow what business he had here. It looks to me serious, constable. Here's a man I don't recognise as a regular Press photographer, and he's got no pass."

"You liar!" cried Chris, and would have sprung at the other had not the constable held him back.

"That looks bad," said the constable. "Come, show me your pass, if you've got one!"

Chris paled. He saw what a terrible position he was in. The constable evidently believed Parker's story, and he not having a pass would corroborate the story. Of course, his innocence could be proved when the "Mercury" could be communicated with, but by that time he would have missed his train, he would have "let his paper down," and be ruined at the very commencement of his career.

"I had a pass, but that scoundrel stole it," he cried. "I followed him down here, and saw him take a photo, and—"

"You'd best shut up," said the constable. "I arrest you on suspicion, and I warn you that anything you may say may be used as evidence against you."

Arrested!

That meant that it would be hours before he would be able to prove his identity. A stranger in a strange city, with no one to whom he could appeal, and with Parker ready to perjure himself regardless of consequences, so long as he could prevent Chris getting his photos to London in time, his position was certainly a desperate one.

Then as the constable, who had relaxed his grip of his prisoner whilst talking to Parker, stretched out his arm, Chris, desperate and determined not to fail his paper if he could possibly help it, ducked, and made a dash for the ladder.

"After him!" cried Parker, and being quicker than the big constable, he reached the ladder as Chris was half-way up and sprang after him.

The next moment, with a howl of agony, he fell to the bottom, for Chris had kicked out and landed him heavily on the side of the head.

The young photographer reached the deck, and for a moment gazed helplessly round. If he got into one of the little boats he knew it would be useless, for the policeman would give chase, and no local boatman would dare to go on when he called to them to stop. If he risked the terribly high jump down into the river, it would be useless, for the water would ruin his camera and his plates.

What could he do?
Then just as the constable, followed by Parker, came dashing up the ladder, he saw his only chance, and a very desperate chance at that.

The deep channel of the river ran right alongside the mammoth battleship, and along this channel a noisy little tug was towing a large sailing-ship. Chris's quick glance had shown him that her lower yard-arm was almost level with the deck upon which he stood, and would not be more than ten feet from the Ever Ready as she passed.

"Stop!"

The constable shouted out loudly as Chris sprang to the side, but the youngster took no notice. Both the policeman and Parker were almost upon him as the merchant vessel came alongside, looking like a toy boat beside the gigantic battleship.

"Here goes!" muttered Chris hoarsely. "I either get to town in time, or I die in the attempt."

With one quick glance he measured his distance, and even as the constable's hand shot out to seize him, he leapt from the side of the ship, out into space, his hands clutching wildly for the yard-arm of the passing vessel!

(Another grand long instalment of this superb new serial next Tuesday.)

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TRUE CRIT TELLS!

THE 1st CHAPTER.

The Football Match—A Dastardly Proposition—A Glorious Victory.

THE excitement in Medford was intense, and the usually quiet, sleepy town was rent in twain by the opposing factions of Trinitarians and Townies, which in loud and often belligerent voices proclaimed the merits of their favourites, and in scathing tones denounced the pretensions and belittled the merits of their opponents.

Trinity and the Town had often met before in friendly matches, but this was the first season either of them had entered for the Cup, and, strange to say, they had been drawn together in the Qualifying Round.

This alone would have caused sufficient excitement in the breasts of the partisans of the rival clubs, but to add fuel to the flame the great, world-renowned engineer, Sir Joseph Gascoigne, who lived in comparative retirement at Holcombe Hall, had promised eleven gold medals for the winners, and had expressed his intention of being present to hand the trophies in person to the victors.

If the excitement in the town was great, that on the ground itself was immense, and loud and long were the shouts and cheers which greeted the players as they made their way to their dressing-rooms, Mark Drayton, the skipper of the Town, being treated to an extra ovation as, with a smile of somewhat contemptuous triumph, he leaped up, with well-assumed carelessness, the pavilion steps.

Then a strange hush fell upon the crowd, and whispered questions passed from one to the other, answered generally by ominous shakes of the head.

"Where is Dick Fairclough? Where is the captain of Trinity? What has become of young Dick?"

The person who could have answered these questions, or thought he could—Mark Drayton, lacing up his boots—gave a sardonic chuckle as the murmurs were borne to his ears through the open casement.

"Oh, you curs!" he muttered. "You miss your idol, do you? Ay, and you will miss him before the match is over. I have taken care of that. Never trust anything to chance, is my motto. What a lucky idea of mine it was to send him to Dunchurch with the Limousin and to write that note asking Sir George to test it with a long run before taking delivery. How the noble Dick will fret and fume when he finds himself bowling along the sylvan lanes of Merrie England instead of footing the leather to the cheers and plaudits of the honest yokels of Medford! Ha, ha!"

The laugh died away on his lips as the murmurings of the crowd without, gradually increasing in volume, at length burst into a deafening shout of: "Here he comes! Well done, my lad! Three cheers for Sir Joseph Gascoigne! Hip, hip, hurrah!"

White to the lips, Mark Drayton sprang to his feet, and, looking out, saw Sir Joseph's graceful Panhard car dash into the enclosure with Dick Fairclough on the front seat by the side of the baronet.

"How did you get here in time?" he asked hoarsely, as Dick entered the pavilion.

Dick laughed lightly. "Not by your help, my dear Mark," said the handsome, curly-headed young athlete, with a scornful curl of the lip. "A nice scurvy trick you thought to have played me by that note to Sir George Hawke, but Sir Joseph Gascoigne happened to be on a visit to Lorton Court, and he saw through your knavery. The trial of the Limousin is postponed, and I am here to lead Trinity to victory."

Mark gave a gasp, and, seizing the other by the coatsleeve, drew him aside.

"Dick," he said tremblingly, "Trinity must not win. If it does, I am ruined! I have backed the Town for more than I dare think of. Let Trinity lose, and there is nothing you can ask I will not do for you. Twenty pounds—"

"You scoundrel!" The scathing epithet was hurled with an intensity and fierceness which fairly took away the breath of the villain, and, wrenching himself free, Dick strode to his dressing-room, his face aflame with indignation.

A few minutes later the teams took the field, and the Town, having won

the toss, electing to play with the wind, Sir Joseph kicked off for Trinity.

The ball was well returned, and for a time play was confined to the home quarters of Trinity, until Dick, who was playing centre-forward, obtained possession and made a fine run half the length of the field, then finding touch.

From the throw-in Trinity again got possession, and a furious struggle ensued in the Town quarters, ending in a corner being conceded.

This had no result, and Drayton, with one of those tremendous kicks for which he was famous, sent the leather sphere hurtling through the air high above the heads of the players to the other end of the field.

There George Gough, Trinity's outside-left, got possession, and made a short run, dexterously passing to Dick as he was about to be tackled by the huge giant, Bill Robey, who was Mark's fellow at half.

Tom Berry, the Town centre-forward, charged Dick, but the latter swerved and sent a long, swinging pass back to Gough, whilst the unfortunate Berry plunged heavily on his shoulder.

Gough dribbled gently forward, and then sent the ball clean across the field to Rob Jelf, inside-right and the champion sprinter of his county, who raced forward like a greyhound.

Dick kept pace with him until he saw the whole defence concentrated about the Town's left goalpost. Then he gave a sharp, peculiar cry, and slackened speed.

Jelf knew the signal, and promptly centred, when, amidst the exultant shouts of friends and the groans of foes, Dick, by a hot shot quite out of reach of the Town goalkeeper, netted the ball, and the first goal was scored for Trinity.

After this the game was contested more fiercely than before, and the Town, spurred on by the scoffs and jeers of the more turbulent of the spectators, made strenuous efforts to equalise, and so far succeeded as to confine the play for some time to Trinity's twenty-five.

Then Downey, centre-half, relieved the pressure, and Jelf made one of his famous runs and passed to Robson, his outside, who swung the ball over to Dick, who in his turn transferred to Gough.

The latter gave Jelf another chance, and so, making beautiful patterns over the ground, the ball was brought within easy shooting distance, when Dick once more banged it between the posts.

Then the referee's whistle sounded for the interval.

Mark Drayton, his face livid with fury, held Robey back as he was making his way to the pavilion for his usual draught of egg and lemon-juice.

"I want to speak to you for a

A Stirring Long, Complete Story of Adventure, by Captain Angus Macpherson.

moment, Bill," he said, with difficulty restraining the tremor in his voice. "Things are going badly with us."

"So it seems," replied Bill impatiently. "But my throat is like a limekiln. Excuse me."

"You must listen! I am your captain."

"Well, be quick. What is it?"

"Do you think Trinity are two to nothing better than us?"

"Not without their skipper. Jelf and Gough are good fellows, of course, but Dick Fairclough is their mainstay. His generalship is fine, and he keeps his men so well in hand."

"Without him we could win yet?"

"We might, but he is there, and he's a terror."

"Just so, but he need not be there much longer."

He whispered something in his fellow half-back's ear.

Bill Robey staggered back, his huge frame quivering.

"By Heaven, Mark Drayton, you are a cad," he cried, "and if ever you suggest such a thing to me again, I'll smash you! No, no; I'll do everything that's fair to win, but when foul play is to be resorted to, Bill Robey is out of town."

"You misunderstood me, Bill."

"No, I did not, Mark Drayton. I understood you well enough, and now you understand me."

With that the burly Bill turned on his heel, leaving his captain standing alone.

After the interval the game was contested as keenly as in the first half—the Town determined to retrieve their position and Trinity just as determined to hold the advantage they had gained.

Fifteen minutes after the resumption, Barry kicked a goal from a corner for the Town, and this was the only ray of sunshine in a dolorous day, for Trinity were spurred on to greater deeds of derring-do, and they added three goals in rapid succession before the whistle blew for offside.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

An Insult Avenged—Father and Son—"I Bide My Time."

AS soon as he could escape the congratulations of his friends and admirers—and their number was legion—Dick Fairclough made his way to the upper part of the town, where the garage and engineering works of his stepfather, the head of the firm of Drayton & Co., were situated.

The men had left off work before he arrived, but the door of the drawing-office was ajar, and, pushing it quietly open, he saw Mark Drayton, pencil in hand, standing at his desk—Dick's—examining a partly finished drawing of a monoplane.

"What are you doing there?" he demanded.

Mark turned sharply round. "What should you think I was doing?" he retorted. "I am looking after the interests of my firm; for I am the Co., you know, and you are, I find, the idle apprentice."

"I scarcely grasp your meaning."

"None so deaf as those who won't hear. I want to know by what right you waste the time that belongs to my father and me on such trash as this?"

"After working hours I consider my time my own, and I drew that plan in my spare time."

"I tell you that you are a liar, Dick Fairclough!" shouted Drayton, carried away by the many fierce passions raging within his breast.

At the horrible word Dick's cheeks turned very pale, but an ominous fire gleamed in his honest grey eyes, whilst his hands clenched mechanically.

Mark was quick to notice his emotion, but his mind was too obtuse to grasp its true meaning.

"You are a liar!"

The repetition of the infamous word was like the lash of a whip on the galled shoulder of a spirited horse, and Dick sprang forward with a hoarse cry.

Then he suddenly checked himself, and spoke in a strangely calm, level voice.

"Mark Drayton," he said, "that is a word I take from nobody. Either you retract voluntarily, or I make you."

"It stings, does it, my little hero?" sneered Mark, as he edged towards the door.

Dick closed it with the toe of his boot.

"No," he said firmly. "You do not sneak away like that. You have insulted me three times to-day, you tried to make a fool of me through Sir George Hawke, and you tried to get Bill Robey to assault me on the field."

"The coward told you?"

"No; I only guessed it, but you condemn yourself. The cup is full, and I am going to try to thrash some of the villainy out of you before you leave this office."

"What nonsense!"

"We shall see."

Without further parley, Dick turned the key in the lock, and then proceeded to take off his jacket and vest.

Mark watched his movements in silence for a few moments; then, snatching up a heavy ebony ruler, made a wild rush forward.

"Out of my way, you young ruffian!" he roared. "Out of my way, or I will do you some damage!"

Swinging his weapon high above his head, he aimed a deadly blow at his plucky young opponent.

Quick as he was in his cowardly assault, Dick was just as quick, for as the blow was about to descend, he stepped nimbly to one side, and sent his clenched fist straight from the shoulder to the point of his cowardly assailant's jaw.

Mark reeled to the wall, the ruler flew from his nerveless grasp, and he felt as though a mule had kicked him.

But after all there was some British blood in his veins, and, steadying himself by a supreme effort, he took off his coat.

Both the young fellows were skilled boxers, but Mark had the advantages of age, weight, height, and length of reach.

Against these Dick had the justice of his cause, nimbleness, and indomitable pluck.

Mark commenced the fight with a vicious lunge of the left directed at Dick's chin, which the latter turned aside over his right shoulder, at the same time countering heavily with his left on the neck.

Mark felt sick, and made a wild hook with his right.

Dick ducked his head, and laid the other's cheek open with a heavy undercut.

Mark Drayton, with a horrible imprecation, and a glare in his eyes like that of a mad bull, rushed recklessly forward in a wild effort to clinch.

But Dick was too wary for this, and cleverly dodging to the right, brought him down to earth with a smashing blow on the forehead.

The fight was virtually over, for though Mark staggered to his feet and made another desperate rush, Dick met him with a one-two full in the face that sent him sprawling.

This time he made no attempt to rise, but lay crouched against the wall, giving vent to the most lugubrious groans, and wiping the blood from his face upon his shirtsleeves.

"I am sorry your punishment has been so severe, Mark," said Dick, as he took up his jacket, "but I hope it will eventually do you good, and that in future you will curb your evil tongue."

Mark Drayton deigned no reply, but the evil light in his eyes was by no means diminished by the just punishment he had undergone.

Dick left the drawing-office with a sad and subdued expression on his handsome face, for he hated the idea of causing pain and suffering to any living thing, and it afforded him poor consolation to know that Mark richly deserved all he had got.

When he was assured Dick had really gone, Mark rose to his feet with an ugly vow of future vengeance.

He then proceeded to his room, and by the aid of cold water and a sponge tried to efface as far as possible all traces of the recent conflict.

When he had been thus engaged for a full hour or more, and his mirror for the hundredth time had told him how futile were his efforts, the door was flung open, and his father strode in and angrily confronted him.

Ralph Drayton was a tall, powerfully built man, upon whose shoulders his fifty years sat lightly.

His features were coarse and heavy, but not devoid of intelligence, though their cleverness was marred by an expression of cunning craftiness that incessantly swept over them.

"What is this I hear of you and Dick fighting in the office like a pair of schoolboys?" he demanded gruffly.

Mark gave him a highly-coloured version of the fracas, in which, of course, Dick was painted in the darkest colours; but, in his excitement, he made several damaging admissions, which gave the astute Ralph a very good idea of the truth.

"A very pretty story, Mark," he said, after listening patiently to the end. "Now, will you listen to mine?"

"Of course you believe what Dick has told you," replied the son surlily.

"He has told me nothing. He came to me half an hour ago to ask if he could have the runabout car to take him to Holcombe Hall, as Sir Joseph had invited the winning team to dine with him; but he never mentioned either you or the quarrel."

"He was afraid," growled the amiable Mark.

"I don't think so. Dick Fairclough is not easily frightened, and, between you and me, Mark," he added, as he stretched himself out in the armchair, "I don't see what he has to be either afraid or ashamed of."

"You see how he has treated me?"

"You are older and stronger."

"Then you hold with him against your own flesh and blood?" cried Mark hotly.

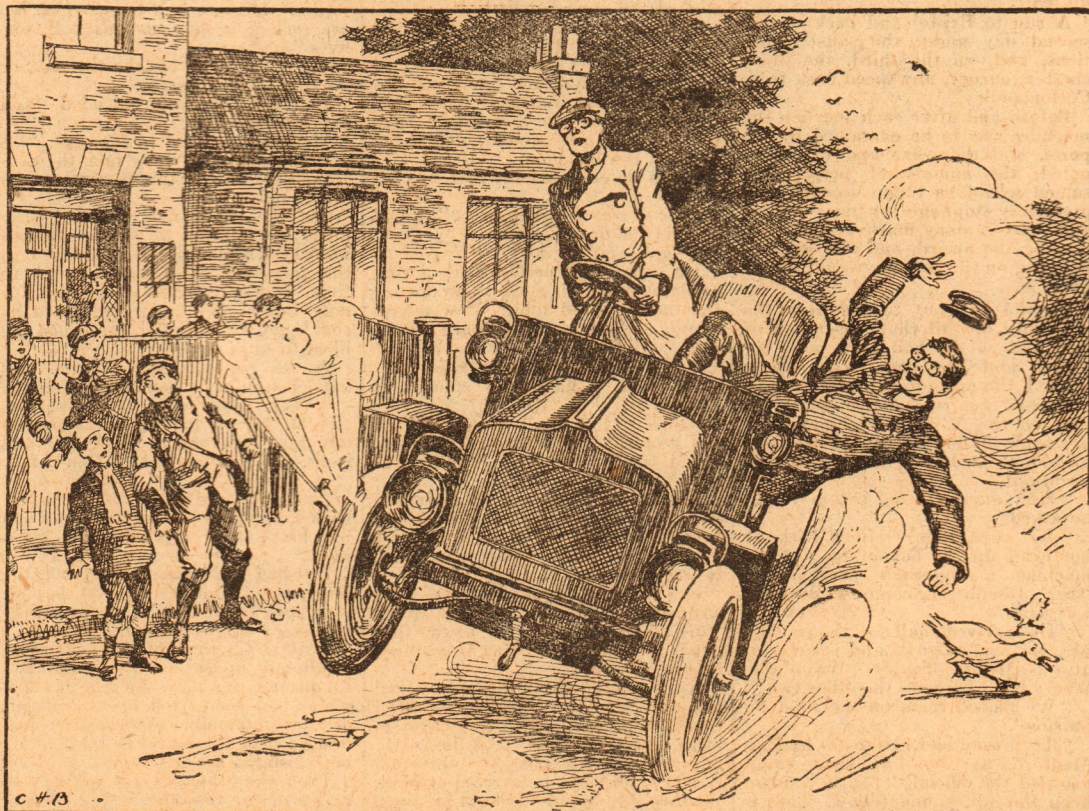
"Bosh! By your own statement you insulted the young fellow, and—well, he gave you a hiding for it."

"And this is all you have to say?"

"It is not all I ought to say by a long shot. I think you should be ashamed of yourself."

Mark's blood was at boiling point.

"I thank you," he said ironically. "And since you think so much of your stepson, I shall leave you to enjoy his company alone, for the



There was a deafening report, and the machine gave a start and a plunge that threw Dalton out sprawling upon the road, whilst Dick had his arms nearly wrenched from their sockets, and the Swiftsure wobbled dangerously from side to side.

A Grand New Serial, by Patrick Morris, Coming Soon in THE BOYS' FRIEND.

same roof shelters him and me no longer."
"Don't be a fool! You know you can't leave me like that."
"Why not? My mother's money will keep me."
Ralph Drayton's face flushed hotly. "You forget that on your twenty-first birthday you invested the five thousand, left by your own mother, in the business."
"But you will not keep me to the bargain?"
"I must, my son. Mark, you think I am a rich man, but I am as poor as a church mouse. I have always lived up to my income, and this business has never been a brilliant success."
"Then Dick Fairclough must go."
"Listen to me. I told you this business had never been a success, and twenty years ago I was on the verge of bankruptcy and ruin. Then I had the chance of a large order from Chili, but to execute it I required new machinery and plant. No one would trust me, and I was in despair, when Dr. Fairclough, Dick's father, offered me the whole of his savings, some twelve thousand pounds, for a half share of the business."
"And you took it?"
"I did."
"Then Dick is your partner?"
"I don't know that. In his will, Fairclough made no mention of it, nor did his widow ever allude to it."
"Not after you and she were married?"
"Never."
"Strange!"
"Yes, but the doctor was a very strange man—absent-minded to a degree."
"Then perhaps he mislaid the deed of partnership and forgot all about it."
"That is always what I have thought, and hoped. I know your stepmother knew nothing of it, for she had no secrets from me."
"Then it is lost, and may be treated as non-existent, so I don't see what there is to prevent you sending this young ruffian adrift."
The callousness of the remark caused even the unemotional Ralph Drayton a feeling of repulsion for his own son.
"I cannot do so just now, at any rate," he said decisively. "You know the great reliability trial comes off in three weeks' time, and all my hopes rest on the Swiftsure winning it, and making a record. Nothing succeeds like success, and if she does all I expect of her, orders will pour in upon us, and Drayton will become a household word in the motor world. Now, Dick Fairclough is the only one who can bring this about. He built it, and knows every bolt, and nut, and spring in the machine, and there is nobody can get the same speed out of her on so little petrol. Once the trial is over, and won, I might think of what you say, but not until then."
Mark Drayton compressed his lips and murmured impatiently, with his fingers upon the dressing-table.
"I do not wish to be hard with you, Mark," continued Ralph, "and if you would like to go away for a few weeks, until the trial is over, you can have a hundred."
"I will take the hundred, it will pay my losses over the match; but I shall not leave home. It would look too much like running away. Dick and I need not renew our quarrel."
Ralph Drayton arose and wrung the hand of the crafty speaker.
"You are a sensible fellow, Mark, and I am proud of you. Forget any hard words I have said." And he abruptly left the room to hide his agitation, for the one soft place in his hard heart was for his worthless son.
"I shall neither forget nor forgive," muttered the younger man, as he once more applied himself to the water and sponge. "I am neither wood nor stone, and shall have my revenge on both of you. You tricked me out of that five thousand of my mother's, and then calmly offer me a hundred, like giving a bonbon to a child to keep it quiet. Yes, I shall be even with both of you when you least expect it. I bide my time."

THE 3rd CHAPTER.

Change of Front—Under Suspicion—More Treachery.

MARK DRAYTON was either a consummate actor, or the severe chastisement he had received had exercised a wonderfully beneficial effect; for, during the three weeks that intervened between the day of the football match and that on which the great motor trial was to take place no fault was found with his conduct.

On the Monday following the match, as Dick was making some trifling alterations in the mechanism of the Swiftsure, he strode up and frankly extended his hand.
"Don't let us continue enemies, Dick," he said. "I am beastly bad-tempered, and I deserved all I got."
"Say no more, Mark!" cried Dick eagerly accepting the proffered grip. "I never was your enemy, and I am sorry I hurt you."
Mark winced, but replied with a light laugh, and the remark that "a man never knows how really good the other fellow is until he has fought him."
Then he proffered his assistance in the work in hand, and rolling up his sleeves, showed that he could use drill, brace, and spanner with the best.
"I don't know if it will improve the running or not," Dick said, as he carefully wiped away the filings and chips from the chassis, "but we shall soon see this afternoon."
"Are you giving her a trial?"
"Not exactly that, but I was thinking of making a half-speed run to Rugby, to test that new tie rod."
"I wish you would let me come as chauffeur."
"I have asked Phil Dalton, the foreman, but"—noting the other's disappointment—"if you like, I will tell him to put up an extra box."
"I wish you would, old fellow."
Mark knew that to take, or seem to take, an interest in the Swiftsure was a certain way of gaining Dick's goodwill, and for the next three weeks worked it for all it was worth, until Dick began to bitterly blame and upbraid himself for ever having doubted or mistrusted his stepfather's son, and, as a kind of atonement, consented—though, it must be owned, very reluctantly—to Mark acting as chauffeur on the opening day of the great event.

This Great British Reliability Trial had been first suggested by a small ring of Coventry manufacturers, to stay the slump caused by the wholesale importation of cheap machines from America and the Continent.
But as the idea took shape, the interest extended, and many of our greatest public men claimed to be allowed to subscribe to a fund having for its object the popularity of British workmanship and skill.
The Duke of Medford, an enthusiastic motorist, consented to serve on the committee, and the richest prizes now competed for were offered to lucky owners and builders of All-British machines.

Racing, strictly speaking, was tabooed, but in the Grand Prize on the return journey between Manchester and Medford, speed would be an important factor.
And it was for this event the Swiftsure was entered.
The conditions were simple in the extreme.
On the first day there was to be a run to Brighton and back, the speed not to average more than thirty miles an hour.
A run to Bristol and back on the second day under the same conditions, and, on the third, the Manchester journey, any speed back from Cottonopolis.

Before and after each journey the machine was to be examined by experts, and the wear and tear only noted, the amount of petrol consumed would be taken account of—and every stoppage for inner repairs would be so many marks deducted in making the award, and the order of finishing on the last day would decide any ties.
On the run out to Brighton the Swiftsure did all that was asked of her, and as she had been built for speed, and the pace was strictly limited, the amount of petrol she had consumed was remarkably small.
When the A. A. official measured her tanks he pursed up his lips, and looked at Dick and Mark with admiration.
"How many started before you?" he asked.
"We were sixth," replied Dick, as he threw up the bonnet to give the machine a thorough overhauling. "Sir Joseph Gascoigne's Swallow was first."

"He arrived half an hour ago. Mr. Bennett's Greyhound is here, so also is Messrs. Taylors' Will-o'-the-Wisp; but where are the other two?"
"We passed them on the road re-paring."
"Then they had better get back to Medford as soon as they can," growled the official, "for, if you can keep this up, young fellow, there is only one in it. You'll beat them all on fuel."
Then he closed his lips with a snap,

as though he feared being guilty of further indiscretion.
Dick stood upright and closed the bonnet.
At the same time Mark, spanner in hand, came up from the pit, after examining the cranks and under-gear.
"Everything is all taut and correct," was his report.
"I thought I heard you using a wrench?"
A momentary flush flitted over Mark's dark features, but Dick was at that moment listening to the official, who was telling him the time he must start back from Medford.
After a light lunch, and a stroll along the glorious Brighton front, Dick returned to the Ship, to see the other competitors start on their homeward journey.

Sir Joseph Gascoigne was just swinging himself into the driving seat of the Swallow, but paused to give the young engineer a nod of recognition.
"You young rascal!" he said, with a jovial laugh. "I believe you intend bringing my grey hairs down, etcetera. Smith has been telling me how little petrol you have used. How do you manage it?"
"The Swiftsure is built to do sixty miles an hour, and so at thirty uses very little."
"Ay—ay, my lad! Keep your secret, for if, as I hear, the machine is your own idea, you may consider your fortune made."
And with a cheery "Good-bye!" at a signal from the starter, he pushed back the clutch, and glided from the garage.

The Greyhound and the Will-o'-the-Wisp followed, but the other two had not yet arrived.
"No doubt they have had enough of it," said the philosophic Smith. "If they can't keep up thirty miles they're not worth breaking up for scrap. Now, Mr. Fairclough, if you please!"
Dick and Mark took their places, but had not gone many yards before the young driver knew there was something wrong; for, though only going through the town at a very moderate pace, the Swiftsure laboured at every stroke.
"A bit of dirt has got in the bearings, perhaps," suggested Mark.
"Shall I give her more oil?"
"It is not that; there is a peculiar jarring, as though one of the rods had gone wrong. We shall see how she goes on the high road, when we can open out."

They were now ascending the steep road from Preston Park, and Dick had to push the clutch back to almost full speed to reach the summit.
On the descent on the other side she went easier for a few yards, and then there was an awful wrench, and the Swiftsure fairly staggered.
Dick's face was banged violently against the steering-wheel, but his wonderful presence of mind never deserted him, and, although half stunned and bleeding, he promptly pushed forward the clutch and applied the powerful brake.

The motor sprang several feet in the air, there was a sharp crack, and then the Swiftsure remained erect, but shaking and quivering like a thing of life that had received a terrible shock. In a moment Dick had leapt to the ground, and dived beneath the machine.
When he emerged his face was set and stern.
"What has gone wrong?" asked Mark tremulously.
"Can't you guess?"
He asked the question with a ring of contempt in his voice as he opened the tool-box and took out a micrometer, a wrench, and a spare piston-rod.

"Can I help you?" Mark asked.
"I think I have had enough of your help!"
"Surely you don't blame me for the accident! If the rod was un-sound, am I to blame? The best of steel is liable to a flaw."
"All these rods are cold drawn, and if there was a flaw you should have discovered it. I do not blame you, Mark. I leave your conscience, if you have any, to do that."
For the next twenty minutes Dick worked as hard as he had never worked before, for he knew that every second was being registered against his pet.

At the end of that time he returned the tools and the broken piston-rod to the box, which he was careful to lock, and once more took his seat; but never a word spoke he to his companion, and when he arrived at Medford, twenty minutes behind his time, he met the scowls of his stepfather with the same dogged silence.
"What was the cause of the

delay?" asked Ralph, as the three entered the works.
Then Dick spoke:
"One of the piston-rods broke on the return journey. It had been ripped nearly through at Brighton, and it is a mercy we are here to tell the tale. Mark examined it at the Ship and reported it sound. You must ask him to explain. If the head of the cylinder had blown off, we should both have been killed."
Ralph looked at his son, whose face was blanched, and whose hands shook as if he was suffering from the ague.
"You had better take Dalton with you to Bristol," he said hoarsely.
Nothing further was said at the time, and Mark slunk off to his own room.
The next day the Swiftsure, with Phil Dalton as chauffeur, covered herself with glory.
Not only did she make the out and home journeys exactly to time, but the great saving in petrol on the two days enabled her, to eliminate the penalty covered by her twenty minutes' delay on the Brighton Road, so she and the Swallow tied for first place, the Will-o'-the-Wisp was a fair third, and the Greyhound a bad fourth.
Ralph Drayton was highly elated, and Dick was not a little proud of the achievement of his favourite, for, barring accidents, he felt certain of beating the Swallow for speed on the run from Manchester on the morrow.
Mark, with bitterness in his black heart, saw his plan of vengeance against his father and Dick vanishing in thin air.
With an air of resolution he sought out Dalton, whom he overtook on the Northampton Road, as he was hurrying home.
"A word with you, Mr. Dalton," he said insolently, as he laid his hand heavily upon the foreman's shoulder.
"I know what you want to say, Mr. Mark. I couldn't help it, believe me I couldn't. He never left the machine all the time, and he overhauled it a second time just before we started from Bristol."
"Well, you know what to expect if the Swiftsure wins to-morrow."
"You will tell your father of the missing stock. Have you no mercy, Mr. Mark? Suppose I have no chance?"
"I shall make one for you. Dick will receive a telegram from the Queen's Hotel, Manchester, telling him to call on one of our customers in Deansgate. He will be away at least twenty minutes, and that must be your opportunity."
"But he will examine the machine before starting."
"You are little better than a child. There are many ways of killing a dog besides hanging it. Here is a little bottle containing the strongest rubber solvent known, and a lead syringe. Whilst he is away you must inject some of the acid into the inner tubes."
"Good heavens, Mr. Mark! Do you know what you are asking me to do? If there is a burst whilst we are racing, it may cost us both our lives."
"You have got to take the risk, or—exposure and prison."
In vain Dalton pleaded and expostulated.
Mark was as hard as adamant.
"You either do it, or take the consequences," were the parting words of the miscreant.

On the next day the Swiftsure made the journey without mishap to Manchester, and as Dick drew into the garage of the Queen's Hotel to time, he felt confident of victory, for none but himself knew the speed he could get out of the car when he liked to push her.
As he alighted, a telegram was handed to him by one of the waiters.
"Very important. Call personally on Meredith, and ask when he can take delivery of Mercedes and Rolls. Space wanted. Don't fail."
"DRAYTON."

As he read and re-read the message, Dick Fairclough knitted his brows and bit his nether lip until the blood came.
He had no reason to doubt the integrity of Dalton, but yet he felt very loth to lose sight of the Swiftsure for a single moment.
At first he thought of driving to Deansgate in the car itself, but had to dismiss the idea, for the speedometer had been fixed by the officials of the Automobile Association; and besides that, the petrol he used would be registered against him.
Then he thought of taking no notice of the message.
But he knew Drayton & Co. were rather pressed for ready money, and that the cheque of Meredith might be

of consequence in relieving the pressure.
"There was nothing for it but to go to Deansgate, and trust to Phil Dalton's honesty."
"Get me a taxi," he said abruptly to the waiter, and when the man had gone he impressed upon the foreman the necessity for his keeping a strict watch over the machine, and not allowing any stranger to come near it.
"Shall I overhaul her, Mr. Dick?" asked Dalton respectfully.
"No; I shall be back in time to do that myself. But you might re-inflate the tyres. They seem rather stale, and there is a greater resiliency in fresh air. I mean to make a record on the run back."
"Do you think the tyres need it, sir?"
"I should like them done. Are you tired, Dalton?"
The foreman's face flushed.
A feeling of compunction at the dastardly task set him had prompted him to ask the question, and the young engineer had misjudged him, and covertly accused him of laziness.
"I am not tired, sir," he replied gruffly; "and your wishes shall be obeyed."
When Dick returned, Dalton was just putting away the pump.

THE 4th CHAPTER.

A Double Disaster—A Game Struggle—Too Heavily Handicapped—A Cruel Accusation—Turned Adrift.

FOR the momentous race to Medford the Swiftsure started first, the Swallow, Will-o'-the-Wisp, and Greyhound following at intervals of fifteen minutes, to avoid as far as possible the cars passing each other on the road whilst at full speed.
Dick drove very carefully through the busy thoroughfares as far as Stockport.

Then he thrust back the clutch, and went at an ever increasing pace through Congleton, and skirting round Macclesfield, slowed down until clear of the winding streets of Newcastle.
Then down the gently sloping road through Stone to Stafford, at a speed so truly terrific that Dalton held his breath, and felt more than half dead with fright, for well he knew that if a burst occurred just then nothing short of a miracle would save them.

From Stafford to Walsall, and again to Potter's Bar there were two more rushes, and the chauffeur found himself alternately praying for mercy and reviling his own fate and the wickedness of Mark Drayton.
"What do you think of the Swiftsure now?" asked Dick enthusiastically, as, at a more sober pace, they negotiated the thronged streets of Birmingham.
"She is a fiend!" Dalton yelled excitedly.

Dick laughed with reckless abandon, for the fever of conquest was in his veins.
"I told you what she would do. But you are not afraid, Phil?" he asked, as for the first time he noticed the starting eyes and pallid cheeks of his companion.
"Afraid! What should I be afraid of?"
His manner, however, convinced Dick that after all Dalton, whom he had always hitherto respected, had a weak spot in his heart.

They were now on the Coventry road, and although at places the gradient is fairly stiff, the Swiftsure simply flew towards the City of the Three Spires.
Then came a catastrophe.
As they were passing through the little village of Mariden, six miles from Coventry, the children were streaming out of school, and Dick slowed down.

Lucky for both himself and the chauffeur was it that his humanity was greater even than his enthusiasm, for, as they were opposite the school, and he was about to again open out, there was a deafening report, and the machine gave a start and a plunge that threw Dalton out sprawling upon the road, whilst Dick, who was grasping the clutch and steering-wheel at the same time, had his arms nearly wrenched from their sockets, and the Swiftsure wobbled from side to side like a wounded duck.
Bruised and shaken as he was, Dick managed to apply the brake, and brought the car to a standstill within a few yards.
Then he hastened to Dalton, but that traitor had received no further damage than a few scratches and a bruised knee.
Seeing this, the young engineer hastened back to his charge.

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"The off driving-wheel tyre has gone," he said ruefully, as he began unslashing the spare one they carried. "Rip her off, Dalton. What a fool you must have been to refill it like that! Pah! What a smell!"

Dalton's hands were trembling so violently that the tool fell with a clang upon the hard road.

"What is the matter with the man? Take a nip of brandy from the flask in the car, and pull yourself together. It is bad enough as it is, but you are making it worse by wasting time like this. Come, get a move on you!"

With the thought of what was to come, the wretch was almost powerless, but Dick himself did the work of six, the sweat pouring in great streams down his face, and at last the tyre was removed.

Then the car was shoved and pushed across the road to a ditch, that they might let the stripped wheel overhang it, and so be free for the fixing of the new tyre.

As they got this into position, they heard the chug, chug of an approaching car, and with a rush and a rattle the Swallow dashed past.

Dick's heart sank, and a huge lump arose in his throat as he saw his hopes of a great and glorious victory vanishing into the distance with the rival machine.

Nevertheless, he did not relax in his efforts, though he received very little assistance from the guilty foreman.

At last the tyre was fixed, the tools stowed away, and the Swiftsure once again dashing grandly along the road.

Then, as they were about to enter the busiest part of the city, there was another loud report, and the car pitched and rolled like a ship on an angry sea.

Another tyre had burst, this time that of the near side front wheel.

Fortunately neither of the occupants were thrown out, though both were severely shaken.

As Dick applied the brake, and, alighting, saw the extent of the damage, two great tears, tears of bitter mortification, stole silently down his cheeks.

The accident (?) had happened in front of one of the great factories of the town, and half a dozen men came running out, and offered their assistance, which Dick gladly accepted, for Dalton was now in another state of collapse.

As Dick had used his spare tyre a new one was procured from the warehouse, but as it was being fixed, the Will-o'-the-Wisp rattled past.

"How many more have you faked, Dalton?" asked Dick, as he once more started the engines, for the smell from the second burst tyre confirmed the suspicion he had entertained first at Minden.

"There are no more, Master Dick. Do not put all the blame on me; I was forced to do it."

"I understand. Mark Drayton paid you."

"No, sir. I am a villain, I know, but not such a wretch as that. The stock at the works was short, Master Dick, and he threatened to prosecute me for theft. It was the thought of my wife and little children."

"You may thank your lucky stars she is not a widow, and they fatherless," Dick replied sternly, as he pulled down his goggles, for they were now clear of Coventry, and had an almost straight run of thirty-one miles to Northampton, and he determined to see what the Swiftsure really could do, and, if defeated, at least not be disgraced.

He coaxed her, and drove her as he had never done before, and as if she had been a sentient thing, she responded to his touch, and the ground seemed to fly from beneath the wheels, whilst trees and telegraph-poles at the side of the road became a blurred streak.

Gently rolling from side to side, she rushed on without mishap. As Dick passed the Will-o'-the-Wisp at Daventry, the old spirit of pluck and nerve once more asserted itself, and he grasped the steering-wheel with a still steadier and firmer grip.

Another twelve miles saw them at Northampton, and then he found he had covered the whole thirty-one miles in something less than thirty minutes.

On and on again, after they had passed through the capital of the shoe-trade, at a pace as furious as before.

But alas! there were only nineteen miles to cover, and the Swallow was nowhere in sight.

If he could only catch and pass Sir Joseph's car his saving in petrol on the outward journey might out-balance the fifteen minutes' start at Manchester.

But it was not to be, and when he pulled up at Medford and alighted,

feeling sick and dazed, one of the first to congratulate him on his splendid work was Sir Joseph Gascoigne, who stood by the side of the Swallow, which had arrived five minutes before.

But if Sir Joseph's greeting was cordial and sympathetic, that of Ralph Drayton was brutal, the presence of the bystanders not being even sufficient to curb his ferocious passions.

Every vile epithet he could think of he hurled at the head of his stepson.

"You have sold me, you cur!" he bellowed. "I have been nourishing a viper, and now it has stung me. Liar that you are, you tried to make me suspect my own son, but you cannot fix the blame for this day's villainy upon him."

Dick looked at him in silent horror. This seemed to doubly inflame the passion of the other, and swinging the riding-crop he carried high above his head, he aimed a deadly blow at the young fellow's head.

But it never descended, for, springing suddenly forward, Dick seized his wrist with a grip of steel, and wrenching away the whip, snapped it in twain across his knee.

"None of that, if you please, Mr. Drayton," he said firmly.

The other gave him a look of deadly hatred.

"I disown you, Richard Fairclough!" he hissed. "I have kept you out of charity long enough, too long. Now I wash my hands of you. You shall find another home for yourself. My roof shelters you no longer. I cast you adrift from this moment, and care not if you sink or swim!" And, turning on his heel, he strode away.

THE 5th CHAPTER.

A Friend in Need—The Night Attack—A Hot Pursuit—A Bitter Wrong Righted.

AS Dick stood, indignant and dumbfounded, he found his arm suddenly seized and tucked within that of Sir Joseph Gascoigne.

"Come with me to Holcombe, and have a bit of dinner," the old man said gently. "I want a quiet chat with you."

"I thank you, Sir Joseph, but I cannot," Dick replied chokingly.

"Why not? Surely you are not going to let the yelping of that mongrel upset you! Come along! My dogcart is here. Jump in. Never mind your clothes. There is nobody to see how you are dressed, except my servants."

In spite of himself, Dick felt compelled to accept the kindly baronet's invitation, although he knew not where he should sleep that night, for what little money he possessed, was in his room at Ralph Drayton's house, across the threshold of which he had determined never again to step.

Arrived at Holcombe Hall, Sir Joseph led the way to his study, or "den," as he loved to call it.

"Now, I want to speak plainly to you, Richard Fairclough," he said, when they were both seated. "Many people think I have retired, and live a life of idleness. They are mistaken. True, I have no need to work for money, but I work for health. I could not live without work."

"The Swallow is a proof you are not idle."

"Pshaw! That is a trifle. Luke Wesley and myself knocked it together in our spare time. Luke is a grand fellow. One of the best engineers in America, and the keenest and most daring aeronaut in the two continents. You will see him at dinner."

"But you said, Sir Joseph—"

began Dick, in dismay. "I know what I said. Well, Luke Wesley is my servant, in a certain way. He is my working manager. You see those buildings—"

pointing through the window at several large corrugated-iron sheds, partly screened by the trees of the park. "They are my workshops and garages for the airship and aeroplanes I am building. Luke Wesley obliged me by coming here as manager for a year. Then he returns to America to start in business for himself. That will be in six months' time, and then I shall be left alone, unless I have somebody ready to fill his shoes."

He struck a match and lighted a cigar.

"Now, this is the offer I have to make. You cannot go back to Drayton."

"Never! Death from starvation first!"

"Quite right, my lad. Well, I want an assistant for Wesley, who will be

able to take his place when he goes. Will the billet fit you?"

"It would fit me too well, Sir Joseph, but I am afraid I should not fit it. I know nothing but the theory of aeronautics. I have never even been up in a balloon, and I am very young."

"Not too young to design a Swiftsure. Wesley will soon teach you all there is to know about flying, and you can give him a wrinkle about motors. I have always told him his engines consumed too much petrol."

"Now about terms. I give Wesley a thousand a year, and so I think if I give you thirty pounds a month for the six months, and the same pay as Wesley gets when he leaves, it will do. What do you say?"

"You overwhelm me, sir."

"Nonsense! Of course you will live at the Hall, and, as I can have nothing in this house that Drayton's money has purchased, you will see about an outfit to-morrow. There are fifty pounds towards it, and if you want any more mind and let me know. You need not be afraid of taking it, for I shall deduct it from your salary."

And so Dick became installed as assistant-engineer at Holcombe Hall, and as Wesley was a thorough gentleman as well as a genius, our hero for the first time in his life had a "right royal time."

The "Gascoigne," as it was called, in honour of Sir Joseph, did all that was asked of it, but Wesley found it rather unsteady, and openly expressed his opinion that it would have a difficulty in preserving its balance in a strong gale.

Then Dick set his wits to work, and in a few days had devised an improvement in the tail that did away with all instability, and the Gascoigne sailed along as evenly and steadily in a gale as an ocean greyhound on a glassy sea.

"You will be a great engineer, Dick," Sir Joseph said that night in his den, whither he had invited the young man. "It is in our blood. Yes, I said our blood, for your mother was my own dear sister."

"Then you are my uncle, Sir Joseph!" cried Dick, springing to his feet in astonishment. "I knew her maiden-name was Gascoigne, but I never thought—"

"Yes, I am your Uncle Joseph," said the great engineer. "As a young man I was a sad scapegrace, and at last I got so deeply into debt and other troubles I was obliged to fly to America."

"There my skill in my profession, and my good luck, brought me wealth and fame. But I was restless, having lost the best of wives, the mother of my little Annie, who is now at school in France."

As Dick turned over for the hundredth time, in a vain effort to court sleep, he heard the sharp report of a pistol from the direction of the garage.

Fearing, he knew not what he jumped from the bed, slipped on his trousers, and dashed out through the side door, as Wesley leaped from the window of his room, which was on the ground floor.

Arriving at the garage, they found Sir Joseph leaning against the door of the garage, a ghastly wound on his left temple, and a smoking revolver in his hand.

In a faint voice he explained.

Unable to sleep, he had got up, and was looking through the window when he saw two figures he recognised as those of Phil Dalton and Mark Drayton, crouching before the door of the garage.

Snatching up the revolver he always kept handy by his bedside, he came down, and, confronting them, demanded their business.

For reply, one of the men had struck him with an iron bar, and he had fared.

"Get out the Swallow and follow them," he said, as the Hall servants came rushing out. "They went down the long drive, and can't be clear of the park under ten minutes or more. Don't let the police interfere. Bring them here. I shall be all right. It isn't the first scrape Josh Gascoigne's been in."

Whilst he was still speaking the Swallow was wheeled out, and Dick and Wesley took their seats, the machine having been fitted with a new tonneau since the great race from Manchester, and now presenting the appearance of a well-equipped road-car with wind-screen and hood.

Still she was the same old Swallow, and sprang forward responsively to Wesley's touch on the clutch.

As they rushed through the open gates of the park they heard the throbbing of a motor in front, and Dick recognised the chug, chug of the Swiftsure; he also understood, by a peculiarity in the sound, she was short of petrol.

Such was the fact, and the Swallow rapidly gained on her. Then the occupants opened fire with their revolvers, but did no damage beyond shattering the glass of the screen.

Seeing this, the fugitives boldly leapt out and plunged into the plantation at the side of the road.

Stopping the Swallow, Dick and Wesley went after them, and a fierce struggle took place.

In the end Dalton and Mark were secured, and brought back to the Hall, where the foreman confessed their object had been to so injure the Gascoigne as to prevent her taking any part in the coming meeting.

Sir Joseph ordered them to be confined in one of the upper chambers until the meeting was over.

"Then I shall make you and your father an offer," he said to Mark. "If you accept it, well and good. If not, it will be the police and penal servitude."

On the great day the Gascoigne beat all records, and Dick left the aerodrome the hero of the hour.

Drayton's monoplane, although steered by a celebrated aviator, was a complete failure, and became a total wreck on her second flight.

After the meeting Sir Joseph sent for Ralph, and made himself known. Then he showed him a deed of partnership by which he, Ralph Drayton, transferred a half share in the firm of Drayton & Co. to Dr. Fairclough.

This the doctor before his death had sent to his brother-in-law in trust for his son.

Sir Joseph also spoke of the dastardly attempt of Mark, but offered to forgive them both, and to give them a fair start in America if Ralph assigned the whole of the works at Medford to Dick.

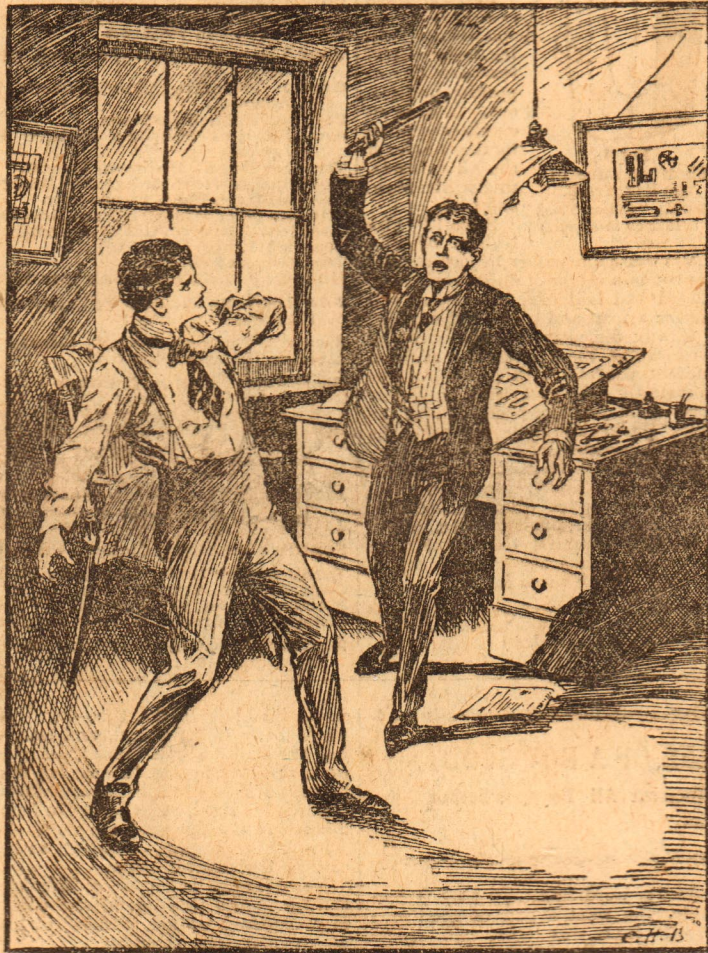
Seeing that he could make no better terms, Ralph Drayton, knowing he was on the brink of utter ruin, sullenly accepted the generous offer, and a few days later Dick was installed as master, and bids fair to become as great an engineer as his uncle, for with him, as with Sir Joseph, difficulties are only made to be overcome, and that, we take it, is—"True Grit."

THE END.

"THE ELFIN BOY."

An Extra-Special, Long, Complete Story of Adventure Next Tuesday, in

THE BOYS' FRIEND.



Mark, snatching up a heavy ebony ruler, made a wild rush forward. "Out of my way, you young ruffian!" he roared. "Out of my way, or I will do you some damage!"

Dick Fairclough scarcely knew the meaning of the word "fear," and as he had a nerve of iron and a boundless enthusiasm, he, under the skilful tuition of Wesley, soon became as expert an aviator as his master, and might often be seen in a Farman or Bleriot in the early morning or evening, careering gaily through the air a couple of hundred feet above the housetops at Medford.

But the great ambition of Wesley and himself was to build a monoplane of their own design which should hold its own against all the great competitors who were engaged to appear at the Grand International Aviation Meeting to be held in the coming spring, at the opening of the splendid aerodrome the Duke of Medford was constructing at Bucklands Park.

Sir Joseph readily entering into their plans, Luke Wesley postponed his departure, and he and Dick worked night and day at perfecting the child of their united genius.

Perhaps Dick worked the harder as he heard from one of the workmen that the Draytons were also constructing a monoplane which, from its description, he knew was being built from the design he had left behind him in the drawing-office.

At last the machine at Holcombe was finished, and Wesley went up for a trial trip.

"Well, I went to India, and there was employed by the Government making a big railway."

"When it was finished they gave me a baronetcy, and I came home and settled down here that I might keep an eye on the Draytons and yourself."

"In you I have found a nephew of whom I am sincerely proud—don't interrupt, I never flatter—and in them two of the greatest scoundrels unhanged."

"Now you, of course, will not inherit the title, and but little else, I am afraid, for I have sunk the most of my capital in this place, which goes to my Annie. Hence my anxiety you should succeed in your profession, for you will have that only to support yourself. Unless Annie—But what am I talking about? You are only children."

That night Dick had little sleep, for he could not help thinking of the strange change a few months had wrought in his fortunes.

Then he had been a friendless drudge, the helpless dependant upon an unscrupulous tyrant; now he was the acknowledged nephew of a great and respected engineer of world-wide fame, and in three days expected to have some little fame of his own, for he was certain that the Gascoigne would hold its own against all-comers, and he was to be its pilot.

A STRONG MAN'S SECRETS.

Muscle-raising Exercises with Domestic Furniture.

This is a grand new series of helpful articles for muscular readers. Some of the exercises are simple and easy; others are difficult. Do not strain yourself to perform any that are too difficult for you, but first master the easy ones, and then work up to those that require greater strength and skill.

WE now have seven exercises, all of which are to be performed with the aid of a chair. I shall describe just three more, and then in next week's number of THE BOYS' FRIEND we will see what can be done with the assistance of an ordinary dining or kitchen table.

Exercise No. 8.

Stand firmly on seat of chair. Raise one leg, and thrust straight out before you in a horizontal position, retaining the balance on the other leg.

From this position slowly lower the body to a sitting position by bending the leg upon which you stand until almost seated upon the heel, being careful to keep the other leg straight out before you.

Raise body to standing position by straightening the legs, and repeat—if possible. This exercise should be performed with each leg alternately, and as proficiency is attained, it may be made more difficult and effective by folding the arms. At first, however, these should be used to assist in keeping the balance. A splendid exercise for all the muscles of the leg, and an excellent test of balance.

Exercise No. 9.

Place two chairs back to back, at a sufficient distance apart to correspond with the width of the shoulders. Take a firm grip of the back of each with either hand, standing between the chairs.

First movement: Raise the feet off the floor by pressing downward, until the whole weight is supported by the arms, which should be kept close into the sides.

Second movement: Raise legs backwards until at right angles with the thighs by bending at the knees.

Third movement: Lower body slowly as far as possible between the backs of the chairs.

Fourth movement: Press body back to the third position by straightening the arms, and repeat until tired.

Care should be taken to keep the feet off the ground throughout the exercise, and the head should be kept well up, chin well in, shoulders back, chest thrown forward. Constant practice will make a surprising difference in the muscles of your upper arms and shoulders. Until quite sure of yourself, it will be advisable to place a rug or cushion on the floor beneath you in case of a tumble.

Exercise No. 10.

Position of chairs and "ready" position as in Exercise No. 9.

First movement: Support body by arms between backs of chairs as before, feet off the ground.

Second movement: Raise the knees well up towards the chin.

Third movement: Shoot legs out before the body, until in a horizontal position, knees straight.

Fourth movement: Return to second position and down to first position. Repeat until tired.

Perform these exercises steadily and without jerking, being careful to observe correct position throughout. This is an excellent exercise for the muscles of the shoulders, thighs, abdomen, and back.

Should the backs of the chairs cause discomfort by cutting into the hands, a couple of dusters should be folded and laid over them—this will ensure a firm and comfortable grip.

If any difficulty is experienced in performing these exercises at first, content yourself with practising one movement only at a time until perfect, when you can proceed with the next, and ultimately perform the whole exercise easily, gradually increasing the number of times as your strength and ability increases.

Now, let us see what can be done with a table—preferably a good, strong one, standing on four or more legs, and with a top which overlaps at least two or three inches.

(Another of these grand articles will appear next Tuesday, when some excellent exercises on a table will be described.)



Fig. 1. Showing Tube of the Egg Trick. (See the "Smart Trick" and back, article on this page.)



Fig. 2. Faked Hat for the Egg Trick.

EGG PRODUCTION EXTRAORDINARY.

A Smart Trick Any Boy May Learn to Perform.

I HAVE here a top hat, with which I'm going to show you an experiment rather out of the ordinary," you say. "You have all seen the old-fashioned trick where a number of eggs are obtained from an alleged empty bag? Well, I'm going to give you the latest version of this ancient trick. But I sha'n't make use of a bag at all. This silk hat will serve in place of it."

You advance to the company and allow them to peer into the hat, and satisfy themselves that it is quite empty, and does not contain any double bottom or secret receptacle for the storage of eggs.

"You are satisfied, I think, that this is an ordinary silk hat?" you go on to say. "Now, let me push up my sleeves to disarm suspicion in that quarter."

You perform this action, and then for an instant tilt the hat, so that its empty interior is shown. You next insert your hand, and immediately withdraw it, holding an egg, which is given to the company to let them be satisfied as to its genuine nature.

Again the hat is shown to have nothing in it, and again you bring out an egg; and this business is repeated till at last half a dozen eggs have been produced.

Figs. 1 and 2 will give you an idea of how this original trick is worked.

A tube of black silk just wide enough to let a small egg pass freely by its own weight, and short enough to hang beneath the vest on the left side, its lower end or mouth terminating an inch above the vest edge, is filled with eggs and hooked in place. A piece of strong elastic runs round the lower seams of the vest and prevents the eggs working downward. Under cover of the hat the lowest egg is squeezed into the left hand, the next egg above instantly falling to take the place of that abstracted.

Fig. 2 shows how the eggs get into the hat. A hole large enough to admit an egg is cut immediately beneath the brim, in which position it is concealed by the leather band inside. Through this aperture the eggs are passed into the hand ready to receive them, ready to break their fall.

THE END.

FREE COUPONS FOR THE PICTURE THEATRES.

GREAT ADDITIONS TO "THE BOYS' FRIEND" LIST THIS WEEK.

On the front page of this number you will find a coupon, and below there is a list of theatres. By presenting a BOYS' FRIEND Coupon at the booking-office of any theatre mentioned you will be admitted at Half-Price to any part of the house at the performances specified.

This week's coupon is available only until Monday, Jan. 16th.

| List of Theatres Where BOYS' FRIEND Half-Price Admission Coupons are Accepted. | When Accepted. |
|--|--|
| Electric Picture Palace, the Square, Walsall Electric Picture Palaces, High Street and Paradise Street, West Bromwich Prince's Theatre, Horwich, Lancs. | Any day except Monds. and Sats. |
| Park Picture Palace, Sankey Street, Warrington Gymnasium Royal Pictures, Duke Street, St. Helens Royal Picture Palace, Ashton-in-Makerfield Central Hall, Pemberton | Any performance except Sat. Wednesday evenings. |
| The Picture Palace, Whitehaven The Athenæum Picture Palace, Maryport | Saturday Afternoons. |
| Palace Theatre, West Hartlepool Boro' Theatre, North Shields New Picture Palace, Gateshead Tivoli, Laygate Circus, South Shields Picture Hall, Sunderland Picture Hall, West Hartlepool Empire Theatre, Coventry | Tuesday Evening. Any performance excepting Saturdays. |
| Cromwell Hall, Lancaster Picturedrome, Longridge Temperance Hall, Preston Picturedrome, Preston | Any day excepting Saturdays and Sundays. |
| West London Theatre, Church Street, Edgware Road, London, W. Grand Theatre, Woodgrange Road, Forest Gate, London, E. Central Hall, Peckham Arcadia and People's Picture Palace, Lewes Road, Brighton Theatre Royal, Darwen, Lancs. Appollonian Hall, Snargate Street, Dover Co-operative Hall, Sheerness The Empire, Wharf Street, Leicester People's Picture Palace, Penzance Electric Empire, Woking The Empire, Wigan Holloway Hall, Holloway Road, N. | Wednesday Minimum 2d. Tuesdays. Wed. and Thurs. to boys not over 16 yrs. Mon. and Thurs. Tues. and Friday. Wednesday Any evening Any performance. Tuesdays |
| The Universe Picture Palace and Skating Rink, Great Harwood | |
| Electric Theatre, Sutton, Surrey Electric Theatre, Epsom Brinkburn Picture Theatre, Brinkburn Street, Byker, Newcastle-on-Tyne Tyne Picture Theatre, Station Road, Wallsend Royal Animated Pictures, High Street, E. Wallsend Abington Picture Palace, Wellingborough Road, Northampton | |
| Electric Picturedrome, Scarborough | |
| Jefferson's Imperial Picture Hall, Bill Quay, Durham Fenton's Pictures, Central Palace, Darlington Temperance Hall, Bradford, Yorks Central Hall, Nottingham Picturedrome, Huddersfield Cinema, Longroyd Bridge, Huddersfield Kinema Theatre, Horn Lane, Acton, W. | |

THE TRIALS AND TROUBLES OF A BOY SCOUT.

Our Helpful Series That Will Interest All Boys, Whether Scouts or Not.

What To Do With Your Staff.

DO you know, I find that lots of chaps are never taught to make any use of their staffs—except to carry them about on parade.

I think that's an awful shame. There's practically no end to the number of useful things you can do with staffs—if you know how, and every scout should know how.

So each week for a bit I'm going to give you tips on "What To Do With Your Staffs."

This week I'll tell you how to play

Quarterstaff,

because quarterstaff is a rattling good game, and a jolly useful one, and now is the time of the year to go in for it—in your headquarters in the dark evenings, or on wet Saturday afternoons.



The Ready Position

Just a word first. To play it properly, you want a pair of good long strong staffs, at least six inches longer than the fellows using them. For learning the "strikes" and "parries," you can wear your ordinary uniform, or any clothes you like, but for "Loose Play," you want helmets and things. I'll come to that later.

When you are learning, the best way is for one man to be called the "Attacker," and the other the "Defender." The umpire calls each strike, "No. 1," "No. 2," and the attacker has to give the strike, and the defender parry it in the correct way.

The "Ready" Position.

To start, the two combatants fall in opposite each other at such a distance apart that they cannot touch each other with their staffs without leaning forward.

On the word "Ready," they fall into the "Ready" position (Fig. 1). The left foot is about twelve inches to the left front of the right one. Both feet should be flat on the floor and the weight of the body distributed evenly upon them. Knees should be slightly bent, and the whole body held loosely. The upper part of the body should be held well back.

The right hand holds the staff about six inches from the "butt"—the thick end—and the left hand about a foot from it.

The Lunge.

At the word "Lunge," the attacker takes a step forward

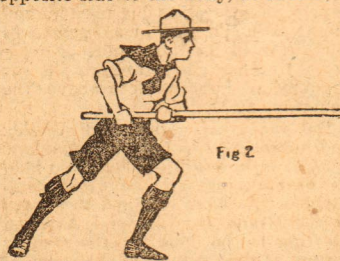
with his left foot, throwing his whole body well forward, and bringing his staff up and forward at the same time, as in Fig. 2. He lets his left hand slide some little way down towards his right, so as to get as long a reach as possible with the staff.

From this position, as quickly as he can, he delivers his strike.

No. 1 Strike is made by bringing the tip of the staff round and down in a diagonal motion, striking at his opponent's right shoulder.

To parry it, the defender draws slightly back and brings his staff up across his body, hands well apart, and strikes his opponent's staff outwards (Fig. 3).

No. 2 Strike is the same as No. 1, but is delivered at the left shoulder. The parry is the same, but on the opposite side of the body, of course.



Lunging from the Ready Position.

No. 3 Strike is delivered horizontally at the opponent's right side.

To parry it, swing the staff down to a perpendicular position, with the butt uppermost, and strike the blow away as before (Fig. 4).

No. 4 Strike is the same as No. 3, but is aimed at the left side.

The parry, of course, is the same, on the other side. In proper quarterstaff there is no striking at the legs. But some fellows do it—or sometimes a No. 3 or No. 4 strike may unintentionally be delivered rather low.

To parry a strike like this, swing the staff down as in Fig. 4, but let



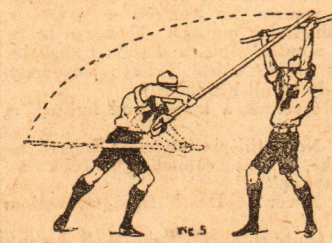
Strike No. 1 and Parry.

the tip rest firmly on the ground well away from the body, and slip the right hand round on to the top of the butt.

No. 5 Strike is usually delivered after parrying a strike from the other fellow. Slide both hands quickly down to the tip of the staff and swing the butt right over in a semicircle straight down at your opponent's head.

It is the best strike of all, but you have to be jolly smart to bring it off successfully.

To parry it, grip the staff firmly with both hands, each about a foot from the centre, and hold it horizontally above your head, catching the force of the blow with all the resistance of your stiffened arms.



Strike No. 5 and Parry.

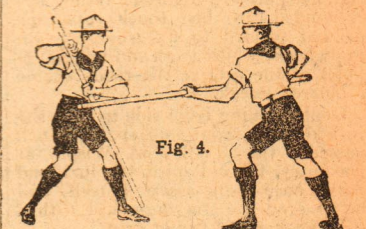
These are the principal strikes and parries in quarterstaff. At another time I'll give you some tips for tricks and feints.

Loose Play.

When you know the strikes and parries well you can indulge in "Loose Play"—just whacking away at each other as if you were having a real fight, like Robin Hood and his chaps used to do.

But whatever you do, don't on any account go in for loose play without properly protecting your bodies. However gentle you may try to be, you'll get nasty knocks—and quite possibly broken collar-bones and cracked heads.

You want wicker fencing-helmets, going right over your head—you can



Strike No. 3 and Parry.

buy them for about seven-and-six-pence a pair. Your body should be protected with a padded fencing-jacket, or, if you can't get that, two or three coats one over the other. You want the padding principally on your shoulders and sides.

Wicket-keeper's pads are the best things possible to protect your legs, and wicket-keeper's gloves—or, better still, boxing-gloves—save you from broken knuckles.

Got up like this, you can go in for as much and as fast and hard loose play as you like.

THE SCOUT-MASTER.

Have You Used Our Picture Theatre Coupons?

The List of Theatres where these Coupons are accepted grows bigger every week.

Sexton Blake: Spy.

NEW READERS START HERE.

In the opening chapters of this grand new serial we read how two Britishers are captured in the fortifications on the Island of Tarkum, off the German coast, while a couple of days later two Germans are seen making plans of Fort Ridley, in the East of England. One German is arrested, while the other escapes with his plans.

The news is abroad like wildfire. The Britishers have lost their plans, while one of the Germans has succeeded in making his escape with plans of the British fortification in his possession.

most valuable strongholds,

so must Britain be upon equal terms with Germany. Sexton Blake is aware that the one German who is captured is none other than Prince Gunther, son of the Kaiser. The famous detective, with his assistants, Tinker and Pedro, are to repair the unsuccessful attempt to obtain plans of the Tarkum fortifications.

Disguised as Baron Rudolf Steiner, chief of the Prussian Secret Service, Sexton Blake gains an entrance to the Tarkum fortifications, succeeds in securing the plans of Fort Tarkum, and with Tinker he escapes.

They are tracked down by Pedro, their clever hound, who the German soldiers have in their possession. The famous detective, who is now wearing the rags of a scarecrow, is made a prisoner, temporarily, in the house of a rich German manufacturer.

Again Sexton Blake and Tinker slips through the hands of the soldiers, and this time succeed in taking Pedro with them.

They rush over open country, through water, and along highways, when at last they are confronted by a huge motor-car. The two spies immediately recognise the German driver of the vehicle in front of them.

"Professor Bruns!" the two gasped in one breath.

(Now read this week's splendid chapters.)

The Meeting of a Friend—A Fresh Disguise.

"PROFESSOR BRUNS!" the two gasped in one breath.

"Why—why how is this?" cried the German. "Is it possible? Ach yes I behold mine dear friend Sexton Blake! And here is the boy Tinker! And also the dog that have such great intelligence! How strange that we should meet here!"

For a few seconds the little group stood there silent, motionless, in the bright light shed by the car's lamps. The clatter of hoofs could still be heard above the wind and rain, but the sounds were growing fainter, and it was evident that the troop of Lancers had turned off into some side-road that led to Herr Bentheim's estate.

That danger having now been averted, the fugitives let their thoughts go back to a memorable time some few years ago when they and the hound had encountered thrilling adventures in Egypt in quest of a mummy—adventures in which they had been brought in contact with Professor Ludovic Bruns in the land of the Pharaohs, and had done him a service for which he had vowed eternal gratitude. And thus they had met him again after long years.

"I beg that you will not detain us, professor," said Sexton Blake, breaking the silence. "And I must ask you, for the sake of the past, to do more than that. You know, of course, that we are—"

"Yes, yes, I know all about it!" interrupted Professor Bruns. "Who does not? You have stolen the plans of the Tarkum Fortress, and you are seeking to escape from my country, where every man's hand is against you. Have I not seen the proclamations and the soldiers riding to and fro, and the police drawing their swords on every vagrant they meet on the highway? Ha, ha! It is good sport! But it is no concern of mine! I am a man of peace, and I care nothing for plans of forts. I admire your courage—spies though you are. You need not be afraid of me, be assured. But why are you out in this terrible storm?"

"From stern necessity," replied the detective.

And he told briefly of their capture and escape.

"Our enemies are searching for us," he went on, "and they will soon be assisted by cavalry from Lemberg."

"They shall not find you," declared Professor Bruns. "No, I will see to that. I have not forgotten what you did for me in Egypt. I am grateful, mine friends, and I will prove my gratitude by taking you with me in my motor-car."

The lad's face brightened, and he looked eagerly at his master.

But Sexton Blake's features were grave, and he was shaking his head.

"It is very good of you," he said to the German; "but, for your own sake, we must not accept your generous offer. The risk is too great. You would be severely punished if it were known that you had aided and harboured spies."

"But nobody will know!" exclaimed the professor. "There will be no risk. My car is covered, and there are rugs inside. I will take you with me, mine friends, and help you to escape to England. Ach, yes, it shall be so! I will have mine way."

The temptation was so strong, the prospect so alluring that Tinker and the detective yielded to it. They could scarcely speak for emotion as they clasped the worthy professor's hand and tried to thank him.

"We will never forget this!" Blake said huskily. "We are indeed in sore straits, and we should soon be captured again, I fear, if we had to depend on our own resources. Our descriptions have been circulated throughout the country, and the presence of the dog is an additional peril to us."

"I can see how you have suffered. But there will be no more of it, Herr Blake."

"Where will you take us? To the Dutch frontier, or to the nearest seaport?"

"No, I cannot do either, as it happens. I must take you straight to Berlin."

"To Berlin?" echoed Sexton Blake. He was staggered at first, but after brief reflection he nodded approvingly. "Nothing could be better, as matters stand at present," he said. "The Prussian capital is the last place in which our enemies will think of looking for us. Our greatest safety will be in the lion's jaws."

"Ach, that is true!" replied Professor Bruns. "I will provide shelter for you, and some day—very soon, when it is believed that you already in your own country are—you will boldly take the train for the frontier."

"And how about Pedro?"

"We will dye him another colour and paint him mit spots, and he will be a different dog. And now I will tell you, mine friends, why I cannot take you to a seaport or to the Dutch frontier. I have been on a visit to a nephew not far from here, and while I am there, and mine chauffeur have been taken suddenly mit illness, I have word that there is a strike in the Moabit quarter of Berlin, and that it is feared there will be serious trouble. You know that quarter, Herr Blake?"

"Yes, fairly well. As it contains some of the Government museums, and also a number of industrial works, it is populated both by well-to-do people and by the working-classes."

"Just so. You will understand, then, that in order to be close to the Imperial Museum, with which I am connected, I have a little flat in the Goben Strasse, just off the Roeken Strasse, in which I keep many treasures, including a valuable mummy. There are in the neighbourhood evil characters who have twice tried to rob me, knowing that I have things of gold and silver; and for fear that they may pillage mine flat if a strike should break out, I am hastening home to protect mine property."

"As for the mummy I spoke of, it is far more valuable than the one we sought for together in Egypt. It was brought from there by an explorer, from whom I bought it when he landed at Hamburg. And I am convinced, from the examination I am making of it that it is the mummy of the famous King Rameses XVII., who reigned four thousand five hundred years ago. If I prove to be right the whole world will applaud my discovery, and I shall be—"

The German savant broke off, and the gleam of enthusiasm faded from his eyes.

"Ach, what a fool I am to talk of such things now!" he exclaimed. "We are wasting time, and you are getting wetter and wetter. In mit you, mine dear friends, and trust your safety to me. I may delve in dusty antiquities, but I am none the less practical, as you will see."

"Heaven bless you!" Sexton Blake said fervently.

And Tinker echoed the words as he and his master and the hound

A Superb New Serial of the Great Detective's Secret Service in Britain and Germany.

START READING IT NOW.

stepped into the snug interior of the big car, which a moment later was speeding on its way, with Professor Bruns at the steering-wheel.

The fugitives had indeed much to be thankful for, and their joy and gratitude were boundless. Their star of hope was again in the ascendant, and shining brightly. An hour or so ago they had been prisoners, looking forward to years of confinement in a German fortress, and now they were free and had found a friend who could be relied upon to do all in his power for them. On the morrow, if all went well, they would be hundreds of miles from the scene of their escape, in a huge city where neither soldiers nor police would dream of searching for them. They felt that they were justified in taking that confident view of the situation since it was most unlikely that their pursuers would even suspect what had become of them.

"If they are clever," Blake said to the lad, "they may trace us into that last piece of wood, and from there back to the road. And then they will find themselves baffled, for there will be no more footprints for them to follow."

A Long Journey—Stopped by the Police—An Old Friend.

FOR hour after hour, mile after mile the car went splashing, rushing on through the dark night, through the pouring rain and the howling gale, while Tinker and the detective kept warm and comfortable inside, having stripped off their wet garments and wrapped themselves in a couple of big fur-lined rugs.

Soon after daybreak a short stop was made at a small village, and from the landlord of an inn the professor procured for himself and his companions a hamper that contained sandwiches and sausages and a bottle of white wine, which were disposed of after the village had been left behind.

And when the large city of Hanover was reached several hours later two more stops were made—one at a clothing establishment, and the other at a theatrical costumier's shop. There was no great risk about this, since the blinds of the car were down, and nobody could see inside. At both of these shops Professor Bruns made purchases, telling a plausible story at each, and thus Sexton Blake and the lad were provided with all that they so badly needed—complete outfits of clothes, false moustaches, and materials for altering their features. And before they had gone much farther they were so respectably attired and so well disguised that they would not have been afraid—assuming that Pedro was not with them—to have walked the streets of any town or village in Prussia.

The storm was over, and it was a clear, frosty morning, with a stiff breeze that was rapidly drying the roads. The sun was shining brightly, and the spirits of the fugitives rose as steadily as a barometer after a favourable change in the weather.

"I am beginning to believe," said Tinker, "that we shall see England again before we are much older. Don't you think so, guv'nor?"

"There is no reason why we should not, since we are no longer in danger," Blake answered cheerfully. "We shall certainly be safe in Berlin, and as our mission has succeeded, and as the copies of the plans are concealed in Pedro's collar, we will

enjoy the pleasures of the city with easy minds for several days, or for as long a time as may be advisable. And when the search for us has been relaxed, when it is believed that we have escaped from the country, we will quietly take our departure."

"By train, guv'nor?" "No, my boy; I have thought of a better plan than that," was the reply. "We could not safely travel by rail on account of the dog. We will have the professor drive us to Bremen or Hamburg, and put us on board some vessel by night that is bound for an English port."

These were no idle words uttered with a view to keeping up the lad's spirits. It was natural, under the circumstances, that the fugitives should feel confident of getting away from German soil before long with the precious plans of the Tarkum fortress in their possession. But they were to be bitterly disappointed. Fate was even then working against them, spinning a web that was to entangle them in its coils.

The day wore on, and nothing happened to discourage the hopes of escape. On the contrary, those hopes were increased by the fact that proclamations concerning the spies were no longer to be seen. Several stops were made for petrol, and a lengthy one was necessitated by some part of the machinery going wrong, owing to which the arrival of the travellers at Berlin was considerably delayed. They were still crossing the bare, monotonous plains of northern Germany when darkness fell, and it was not until three or four hours later that they passed the borders of the Prussian capital, coming upon it almost before they realised that they were there.

They saw no wretched little villas, such as disfigure the outskirts of London and other capitals. They first beheld detached blocks of buildings, in which many families dwell in cleanliness and comfort; then wide asphalted thoroughfares lined with trees, in which trams and buses were running; then a handsome bridge that spanned the River Spree; and after that the Moabit quarter of the city, where nearly every window of the tall houses had a balcony, and every balcony, whether it marked the home of rich or poor, presented an attractive picture of vines and flowers.

For a little time plenty of life was visible, and then by degrees a curious change was observed. There were no longer any people to be seen, save one or two figures that slunk in shadow, as if they were afraid of something. From a distance floated a dull, throbbing noise, mingled with muffled reports. Here street lamps were burning, and here were others that had been smashed and extinguished. Many of the windows to right and left had been broken, and many had the shutters closed. The pavements were littered with glass, and the roadway

with fragments of bottles, through which Professor Bruns had to drive with great caution.

A shrewd suspicion soon occurred to Sexton Blake and Tinker, and as they were not afraid to show themselves, since they were well-dressed and disguised, they thrust the bloodhound under the seat, and then lowered the windows on both sides. As they were about to look out, a pistol-shot was fired at them from the rear, and it so frightened the professor that he sent the car ahead at full speed, and swerved into the first turning he came to. A few yards farther on a bit of glass punctured one of the tyres, which burst with a loud explosion; and when the vehicle had stopped, after cannoning into the kerb, it was at once surrounded by a score of policemen, who angrily threatened the occupants and brandished swords and revolvers.

"They surely can't be after us!" gasped the lad.

"No; it is all right," declared Blake. "I don't think we have anything to fear."

He was wrong, however, for the police were in such a mood that they would have blindly attacked any person. Already swords were slashing away at the woodwork of the car, and serious injury would have been done to those inside—they might even have been killed—had not the driver been suddenly recognised by one of the assailants.

"Stop—stop!" he shouted, gesticulating to his comrades. "These are not meddlesome journalists. I know this gentleman. He is Professor Bruns, who lives round in the Gobenstrasse."

"Yes, that is right!" the professor angrily exclaimed. "How dare you molest me, you rascals? What does this outrage mean? And what is wrong in the neighbourhood?"

"It is the strike, herr," said a sergeant of police, as he touched his cap. "Have you not heard of it?"

"The strike!" echoed Professor Bruns. "Ah, of course! I have been so busy thinking of other matters that I forgot that I had heard rumours of a strike, and principally on that account I returned hastily to Berlin from the country. When did it start?"

"Last evening, herr."

"And is it still going on? Are things very bad?"

"They could not be much worse," was the sharp reply. "It is a revolution, Herr Bruns—an outbreak of red anarchy more than anything else. The striking heavers and carters from the coalyards have been stirred to madness by agitators, and joined by hundreds of the scum of the Moabit quarter. The hospitals are full of injured, and there are scores of prisoners in gaol. We have been fighting for twenty-four hours, off and on, and this is the first rest we have had since darkness came."

(Continued on the next page.)

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It is like trying to drive rats from their holes, for when the mob are hard pressed they scatter and burrow into these tall houses, and we can't get the better of them, though our men are all over the district. It has been hot work, I can tell you, and the end is not in sight yet. Berlin has never seen anything to compare with this."

The conversation ceased for a moment owing to the noise made by an ambulance-waggon that was clanging along a side street. Sexton Blake and the lad had heard all, and it may be imagined what their feelings were. This strike, to which they had attached no importance, threatened to destroy their hopes of safety. It looked now as if they would not be able to get through to the professor's place of residence, since the way appeared to be blocked, and the car had burst a tyre. If they should be compelled to get out of it—and they could hardly doubt that such would be the case—the sight of the big bloodhound would infallibly draw suspicion upon them, and lead to the discovery of their identities. As yet nobody had taken the trouble to peer in at them. They waited and listened in suspense.

"This is very distressing," declared Professor Brun, when the rattle of the ambulance-waggon had grown fainter. "I am sorry to hear it. I hope that no damage has been done to Moabit Mansions, where I live?"

"No; that building is safe," replied the sergeant. "The Gobenstrasse has been guarded by the police at both ends since this morning, but they may be beaten off at any time. The rioters have sacked a number of places, and are eager to get at their work of destruction again."

"I am alarmed at what you have told me. I must reach my flat without delay. Will you kindly help me, my good fellow? Half a dozen of your men will be sufficient to push my disabled car."

"I am sorry, herr, but my orders are to let nobody pass. You cannot get to Moabit Mansions to-night. To attempt to do so would be dangerous, for the Rokenstrasse beyond this point is held by the strikers."

"I must get to my flat, sergeant, and at once. I refuse to be stopped! I have the rights of a citizen, and I demand them! I will complain to the burgomaster, to the Kaiser, if need be."

"You can complain to whom you like, herr. I have my orders, and they must be obeyed."

"I will pass!" raved Professor Brun, shaking his fist. "You have no power to stop me! My valuable collection of antiques is in peril! I have in my flat King Rameses XVII., who is worth ten times his weight in gold! No greater monarch ever lived than this ruler, who—"

"The Kaiser is the greatest of all monarchs, dead or alive," interrupted the sergeant, with a frown. "Be careful what you say, herr professor, or I will charge you with lese majeste. But here comes our chief," he added. "You can argue the matter with him."

With that the sergeant stepped back, and some of the others did the same, leaving a way open for the individual referred to. He came forward with a quick, heavy stride—a man of uncommonly large stature, with clean-shaven, commanding features, and cold, grey eyes that were like burnished steel. He wore a peaked cap; and a bandage on one wrist and a strip of plaster on his cheek indicated that he had been taking an active part in the fighting. "By Jove, I know that fellow!" whispered Sexton Blake, who was peeping from a window of the motor-car. "It is my old acquaintance, Inspector Leopold Jager!"

"My word, so it is!" gasped Tinker. "I remember him well. I don't like this, guv'nor. If we should have to talk to him, he may recognise our voices."

"No; I think not," was the reply. "Don't worry about that, my boy. We have only one thing to fear, which is that Pedro may betray us."

The Storm Breaks—Blake Leads a Hand—A Daring Rescue.

INSPECTOR JAGER, who was acquainted with the professor, nodded curtly as he paused by the front of the car, and Professor Brun then explained the situation in a few words, and concluded by mentioning his precious mummy, and demanding that he should be allowed to reach his flat.

"Peaceable citizens have been advised to remain indoors," said the inspector, ignoring the request. "How does it come that you have not heeded the warning?"

"I have been down in the country, and have just returned," the professor answered.

"Who are with you?"

"Two friends I have invited to pay me a visit."

"Their names, please."

"Herr Kasper Treptow and Herr Paul Rixdorf. They are from the town of Volstein. And now, if you will be good enough to let me—"

"Have patience!" broke in Inspector Jager. And with that he glanced at the occupants of the car, whose faces could be seen by the light from a near-by lamp-post. "I am obliged to be very careful," he added, in a low tone, satisfied with his scrutiny, "for those British spies have disappeared in the neighbourhood of Volstein under mysterious circumstances."

"Do you suggest, sir, that I would be capable of giving aid to the enemies of my country?" Professor Brun exclaimed indignantly.

"Certainly not. I know you better than that."

"Thank you, inspector. I am not offended. But I am waiting for you to—"

"I am sorry, but I cannot grant your request."

"You refuse to let me go to my own flat?"

"I refuse to let you risk your life, herr professor. It would be perilous

almost forgot that they were on the horns of a most awkward dilemma.

A very inferno of passion seemed to have been let loose. A clamour from hundreds of voices, mingled with the incessant crackling of pistols, and with the screams of women and children who were hurling flower-pots and other missiles from the balconies of the five-storied houses, with cries of pain, and hoarse shouts, and the clash of steel. Some distance up the street a mattress, soaked with paraffin, had been set on fire, and the glare of the flames shone on the faces of the mob, who, raving and howling like wild beasts, charged again and again on the police.

The latter, relying more on their sabres than on their Browning revolvers, suffered severely from the first. They fell back a little, advanced for a few yards, and were a second time forced back until they were close upon the motor-car. Meanwhile, Blake had seen more than one policeman stagger to the rear bleeding from wounds; and now, as he judged that the situation was critical, he felt that he could no longer remain where he was.

"I can't stand this," he said to Tinker. "I should be a coward if I did not lend a hand to these brave fellows."

"I'll do the same," vowed the lad. "Let me come with you."

to follow, their way was barred to them by a fresh body of rioters who had swarmed out of an alley. They were in a savage mood, and they uttered threats as they hurled themselves upon their hated foes in uniform.

"Repulse these scoundrels!" cried the British detective, as he flourished his blade. "We must beat them off, men! Be quick, for your chief is in danger!"

The police were willing enough, but they met with so desperate a resistance that their efforts were at first futile; and Blake, seeing this, and imagining that he had heard the inspector calling for help, made a valorous attempt to break through the rioters, and succeeded in doing so by slashing right and left. Bruised and breathless, with his coat torn in several places, he emerged from the scrimmage within a yard or so of the drinking-shop; and at once, without looking back, he flung the door open and sprang inside to behold a scene that alarmed him.

He had come barely in time, for Inspector Jager was fighting single-handed for his life, keeping off with his sword a dozen ruffians who had got him into a corner, and were yelling like fiends as they tried to slip under his guard. They did not at first see Blake, who, taking advantage of this, promptly cleared a way

flushed and excited, and bearing traces of rough handling.

"The fight is over!" he exclaimed. "Mounted police have arrived, and they are clearing the street!"

Tinker Disobeys—The Inspector Helps—The Crisis.

SEXTON BLAKE was unpleasantly surprised by the appearance of the lad, and as he quickly advanced to him and drew him towards the door, there was a frown on his face.

"You have disobeyed me," he whispered sharply. "Why didn't you remain in the car?"

"I was worried about you, knowing what reckless things you do," Tinker answered. "I was afraid you would get hurt."

"That is no excuse. It was madness to leave Pedro alone."

"He is all right, guv'nor. I told him to remain under the seat, and not to make any noise, and I am sure he understood what I meant."

There was no time to say more. Inspector Jager was approaching, and when the lad had been introduced to him in the name of Paul Rixdorf, the whole party withdrew from the drinking-shop. It was quite true, as Tinker had stated, that the fighting was over for the present. Mounted police were clattering up the Rokenstrasse, driving before them the mob of rioters who had not had a chance to take to their usual cover in that street; and a fusillade of revolver-shots, fired at the windows of the tall houses to right and left, had put a stop to the throwing of missiles.

An ambulance-waggon had already arrived, and a surgeon was examining the wounded strikers and police, who were lying here and there, some unconscious and some groaning with pain. The motor-car had not been disturbed, and Blake had an opportunity of speaking a few words to the bloodhound before he joined Professor Brun, who had got down from his seat, and was talking to the sergeant with whom he was acquainted. He turned to his English friends, obviously worried because they had mingled so freely with the police, and at that moment the inspector came up to him and accosted him.

"I have changed my mind, herr professor," he said, "owing to the altered circumstances. The Rokenstrasse is now clear of the rioters, and it will be kept clear of them, for I intend to have it guarded at both ends. It will therefore be safe for you to proceed to your flat, and you have my permission to do so."

"It is very good of you," replied Professor Brun, with a smile of gratification. "But I have burst a tyre, and my car cannot be—"

"I will have it hauled to Moabit Mansions by some of my men. There will be no difficulty about that."

"Thank you, Herr Jager. I have been alarmed for the safety of my mummy, and you have now greatly relieved my mind."

Several minutes later the big motor-car, with Pedro concealed inside of it, was being pushed slowly up the Rokenstrasse by seven or eight policemen, and by Sexton Blake and the lad, who, before they had gone far, exchanged ominous, meaning glances. A dark, terrifying thought had occurred simultaneously to both of them. The bloodhound was all right where he was—it was unlikely that he would betray his presence in any way—but he could not remain there much longer. How, then, was he to be got out of the car and into the professor's flat without being seen by the police? That was the problem, and it seemed to have also occurred to Professor Brun, who looked dubiously at his friends.

"Everybody in Berlin must have read a description of Pedro," whispered Tinker, with his lips close to his master's ears. "If the police get a glimpse of him, they will suspect who we are as quick as lightning."

"Yes, they certainly would," murmured Blake.

"It is an awful scrape, guv'nor. How the dickens are we to get out of it?"

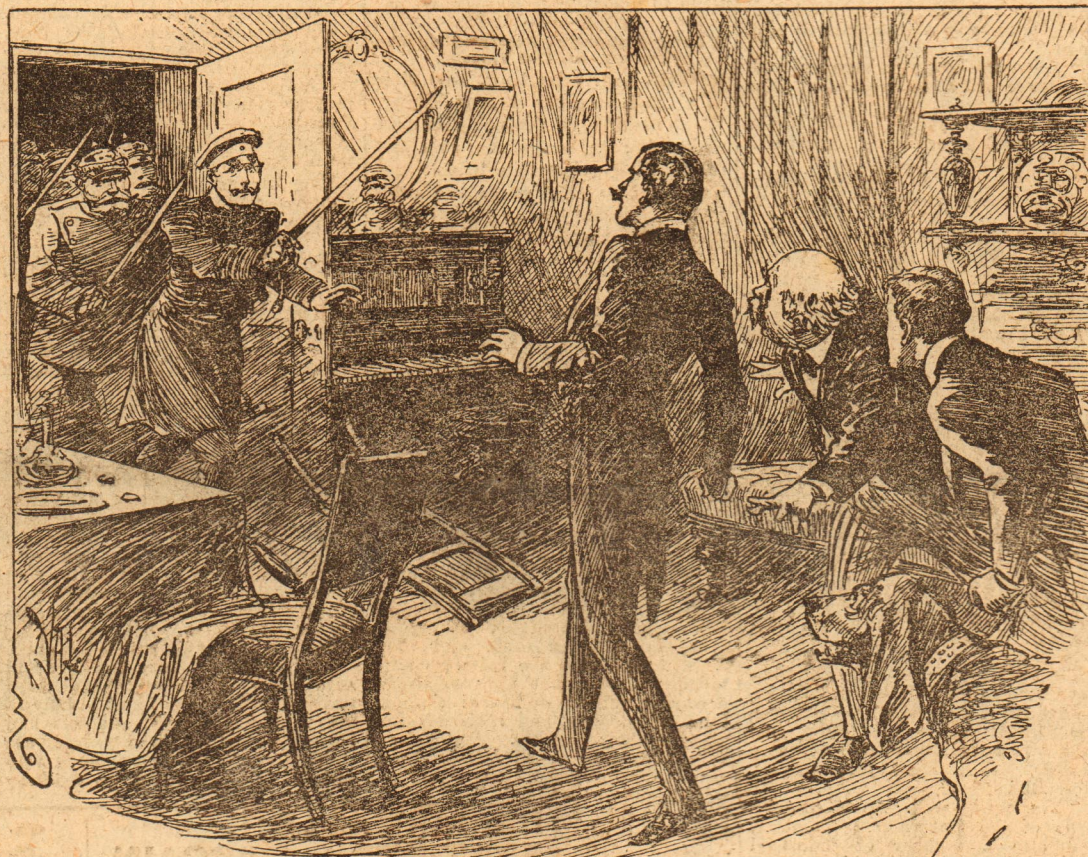
"I have no idea, my boy. We shall have to trust to luck."

"It would be almost as bad for the professor as for us."

"Yes, he would suffer with us."

Steadily the crippled vehicle rolled along the street, gazed at occasionally by a face that was cautiously thrust from some darkened window overhead; and with every step, with every shove Sexton Blake and Tinker felt that they were so much the nearer to the inevitable moment when they must be suspected and denounced.

(Another thrilling instalment of this grand detective serial next Tuesday.)



From outside the apartment came the sound of heavy footsteps. Sexton Blake, Tinker, and the professor leapt to their feet, and Pedro uttered a low, ominous growl. A moment later the door was burst open and the police dashed in.

for you to try to get through to the Gobenstrasse. At any moment, indeed, we may be engaged in a fierce battle. You had better go to a hotel with your friends, and remain there until morning."

"But what of my mummy?" cried Professor Brun. "It may be damaged or destroyed."

"I can't help that," replied the inspector. "For your own sake, I must decline to—"

He paused abruptly, listening to a tumult that had just broken out, and was to verify the prophecy he had made. The sharp report of a pistol had been followed by shouts, and by the sound of splintered glass falling; and in almost less time than it takes to tell, Inspector Jager and his men were confronted by a mob of two or three hundred persons, who had swarmed suddenly from dwellings and passages, and rushed down the Rokenstrasse.

"There is going to be trouble," said Tinker. "What shall we do?"

"We must remain where we are," Blake answered, "unless things get too hot for us."

Further conversation was impossible so deafening was the noise. The professor crouched on the driving-seat, half-dazed by the storm that had burst so swiftly, while Sexton Blake and the lad, from inside of the car, witnessed one of the thrilling scenes that were to make the Berlin riots memorable; and while watching it, with increasing excitement, they

"No, you must stay here and keep Pedro under the seat."

"All right, guv'nor, if I must. Take care of yourself. If you lost your false moustache—"

"I'll be careful, my boy. Don't worry."

With that Sexton Blake opened the door and jumped out of the car, and when he had picked up a sabre that one of the injured men had dropped, he dashed into the fray, and soon got to the front of it, where he found himself by the side of Inspector Jager, who glanced at him suspiciously.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"I am Herr Treptow, the professor's friend," Blake replied. "I have come to help you."

The inspector nodded assent, and more than once in the next few moments he looked gratefully at the disguised detective, who used the flat of his sabre to such effect that the speedy turning of the tide was in a great measure due to him. The strikers wavered, and yielded, and began to run, with the police after them; and when the mob had been chased for a short distance up the Rokenstrasse, and were scattering, Inspector Jager caught sight of one of the ringleaders whom he was anxious to arrest.

But the man was too quick for him. He took to his heels, and vanished into a drinking-shop that was close to one side, and the inspector, after shouting to his comrades, darted in pursuit. And now, as Blake and the police

through them, and planted himself at the inspector's side.

"Get back, you rascals!" he shouted. "Get back, or you will be sorry!"

"Thank you, Herr Treptow!" panted the police official. "I needed help badly!"

They were both in need of help now, but it did not come. For a little time they stood there at bay, holding their assailants off with their blades, while jugs and bottles and glasses struck the wall behind them, and narrowly missed their heads. Though the inspector had wounded two of the men, and Blake had disabled a third, the others did not relax their desperate efforts, and the situation was critical when of a sudden a force of police rushed into the room, brandishing swords and revolvers.

The cowardly ruffians at once turned and fled, and as they were hastening through the rear of the premises pursued by the police, Inspector Jager gripped the detective's hand.

"You saved my life, Herr Treptow," he said. "You are a brave man, and I shall not forget what you have done for me."

"It was nothing," Blake modestly replied. "I saw you dash in here, and I followed because I was afraid you would be in danger. I am glad that I was able to—"

He paused at sight of a familiar figure, and one that he had not expected to see. Tinker had just entered the drinking-shop, looking