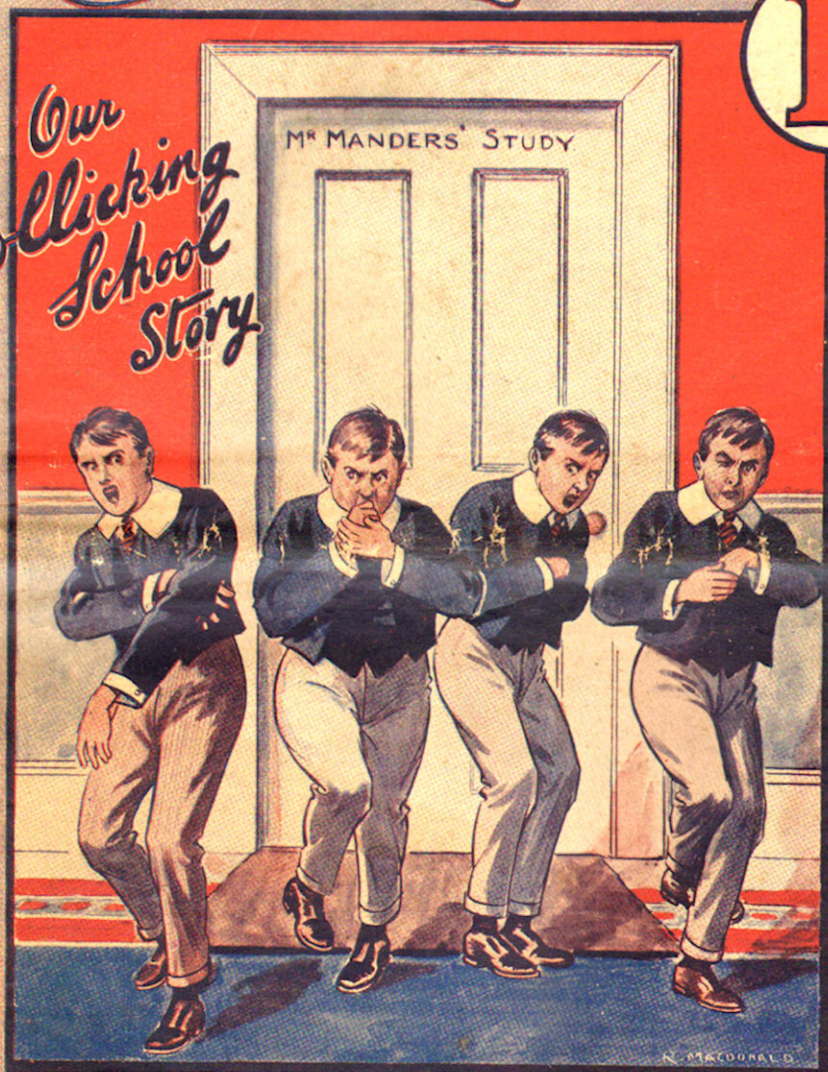


THE BIGGEST PENNY BUMPER NUMBER ON RECORD!

THE BOYS' FRIEND

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*Our
Rolllicking
School
Story*



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A MAGNIFICENT LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL TALE OF JIMMY SILVER & Co.

The Rebels of Rookwood!

BY OWEN CONQUEST.



"HANDS UP FOR A GOOD OLD BARRING-OUT!" CRIED JIMMY SILVER.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Unprecedented.

There was a buzz of excitement in Big Hall at Rookwood.

It was past the time for morning classes, but the bell had not rung.

The fellows, instead of going into their Form rooms, were gathered in Big Hall, or grouped about in the passages, talking in subdued but excited tones.

A stranger looking into Rookwood that morning would have seen at the most casual glance that there was something "on."

The prefects of the Sixth might have been observed looking very serious. Bulkeley, head of the Sixth and captain of the school, had quite a portentous expression of gravity. Knowles, the head prefect of the "Modern" side of the school, had quite an owl-as-a-boiled owl, according to Jimmy Silver's expression.

But the juniors did not look solemn. They looked excited, interested, curious, and anticipative. But not solemn. Whatever it was that had happened out of the common, it had not the effect of dashing the spirits of those cheerful young gentlemen.

The "Fistical Four" of the Fourth, the great leaders and heroes of the Classical side, were standing in a group by the big doorway. They were talking—all at once. And their talk was punctuated by subdued chuckles. Upon Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Newsome, and Raby the

gravity of the situation was evidently totally lost.

"No more lessons very likely," Lovell remarked, with an ecstatic smile.

"No more rotten Latin till Bootles comes back!" muttered Raby.

"Football all day long!" said Newsome. "My hat! This is what I call something like. And won't we rag those Modern cuds!"

Jimmy Silver chuckled gleefully.

"That's the best of it," he said. "Influenza on the Classical side; all the masters from the Head down had up, and health normal on the Modern side. We can't have lessons without masters—at least, I don't see how we can. And those Modern cuds will be mugging up German, and book-keeping, and maths, and stinks, just the same as usual, while we're having the time of our lives. This is where we go at."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulkeley of the Sixth turned a tremendous frown upon the cheery juniors.

"What are you cackling at, you young sweps?" demanded the captain of Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver coughed.

"Ahem! I—I just caught sight of Tommy Dodd! Those Modern kids always make me laugh a bit—their faces, you know—"

"This isn't a laughing matter!" said Bulkeley sternly.

"Nunno! Of course not, I'm surprised at you fellows," said Jimmy Silver, turning a severe glance upon

his companions. "Can't you keep serious at a time like this? How would you like to be laid up with the 'flu—what?"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"I'm ashamed of them," assented Jimmy Silver. "Disgraceful, I call it! If they cackle again I'll punch their heads. Fancy cackling when the poor old Head has been taken away to a nursing home! Fancy chortling when our own respected Form-master is laid up in the sanatorium! Imagine smiling, when the master of the Fifth has had to go away for his health! I'm simply shocked. You—ow—ow! Loggo my ear, Bulkeley!"

Bulkeley did not seem in a humour to appreciate Jimmy Silver's remarks. He gave his ear a twist before he released it. Jimmy rubbed it ruefully as the captain of Rookwood walked away frowning.

"You! Come to think of it, chaps ought to be sympathetic," said Jimmy Silver, after some reflection. "Old Bootles isn't a bad sort. I'm sorry he's seedy. I'm sorry for anybody who's seedy. But a fellow can't be expected to be down in the dumps because lessons are cut. Now can he?"

"Hardly!" agreed Lovell. "Still, I—I'm sorry!"

"Oh, yes, we're sorry," said Raby. "But they did not look sorry."

It was really a peculiar state of affairs. The Head had taken a chill, and had gone to a nursing home for a time. Matters might have gone

on much the same as usual in the absence of the Head, but there was influenza in the school. The Classical side at Rookwood occupied the old original building of Rookwood Abbey, and all the Classics were proud of it to a man—or, rather, a boy—and turned up their noses tremendously at the brand-new Modern wing, where there were red bricks, and electric lighting, and so forth. But certainly the ancient building had damp corners and draughty passages, and perhaps that helped to account for the present trouble.

Mr. Wickett, the master of the Fifth, had been laid up with "flu." Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, had followed his example—unintentionally, of course. Mr. Tutt of the Third had gone the same way. Mr. Raynor, who presided over the fags below the Third, had developed the same complaint. And they were all Classical masters. Modern masters, who lived in the Modern wing, were quite normal. The attack had been sudden, but it had been complete.

And without masters how were lessons to go on? That was what the Classics wanted to know. And with the Classical masters all on the sick list, and the Modern instructors going strong, it really looked as if Classical instruction must cease for a time, while the Modern side went on grinding the same as usual. At least, that was how the juniors considered the matter. They were sympathetic enough towards the unfortunate gentlemen who were wrestling in the grip

of the 'flu. But from their own personal point of view matters were going on quite nicely.

The smiles of the Fistical Four had an exasperating effect upon their rivals of the Modern side. Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle looked daggers at them. The state of affairs did not please the Modern heroes so much.

"I say, you'll be late for stinks, Doddy!" said Jimmy Silver, with a grin at the chief of the Modern juniors. "Stinks" was the classical name for chemistry, which was a subject in the Modern curriculum at Rookwood.

"Blow stinks!" said Tommy Dodd. "That isn't first lesson, you ass; and besides, the bell hasn't gone. Looks to me as if you Classical worms will be wringing out of your lessons!"

"Just what we were thinking," assented Silver.

"And we're going on grinding just the same!" growled Tommy Dodd.

"Yes, isn't it ripping?"

Tommy Dodd glared.

"I don't call it ripping! I call it rotten! Why couldn't old Mander catch the 'flu as well? Why couldn't Herr Kinked catch it—beastly Prussian, too! It's sickening."

"Oh, they catch all sorts of things on this side!" said Tommy Doyle, with a sniff. "The rotten old place ought to be pulled down. 'Tain't fit to live in!"

"Why, you Modern worm—" began Lovell hotly. Any aspiration

(Continued on the next page.)

The Rebels of Rockwood!

(Continued from previous page.)

"Or a housemaid," said Cook.
"Look fit for a hospital, don't they?" remarked Doyle.
"Up up the grand with those modern wastes!" said Jimmy Silver.
And the Fictical Four rushed on their old rivals. With no Classical master to be feared, they felt an unaccustomed sense of liberty. The usual restraints were removed. Under the peculiar circumstances, they felt that they were entitled to bump Cooky Modern each even in the doorway of Big Hall.

"Back up!" said Jimmy Silver. "Dad, not at all! I am to a 'scrag'." In a moment more there was a wild and whirling confusion, as in the big doorway. Lovell and Tommy Dodd were lunging one another, and Big and Cook were trying to get Jimmy Silver and Newsome collared. Doyle and bumped him on the floor. "Tom!" and "Doyle!" and "Doyle!" more Modern rushed to the rescue at once—and then, of course, a crowd of Classics piled in, and the little scrag promptly assumed the dimensions of a little rival.

"Back up, Classics! Down with the 'scrag' merchants!"
"Give us some!"
"You—ow—ow!"
Jimmy, bump!
"Down, Moderns!"
"Yarrah!"

It was at that excited moment that Mr. Manders, the senior master of the passage, Mr. Manders, senior master of the Modern side, was tall, thin gentleman with a long, thin nose, and a short, sharp temper. He stopped and glared at the sight of the dusty, dishevelled, straggling fags. And as he stopped, a frontal attack by the Moderns drove the Classics back furly upon Mr. Manders, and they swarmed round his legs and ankles into him, and sent him staggering. Mr. Manders brought up against the wall, in a state of breathless fear.

"Oh, my hat!"
"There was an instant stamping of feet. Before Mr. Manders recovered his breath, the passage was clear. A scrag and a necktie remained on the wall of the room. But the juniors were fleeing for their lives, and they vanished round corners as if by magic.

Mr. Manders coughed, and gasped, and sobbed, and made a mental note of the delinquents he had recognized. Then he strode on into Hall, with his gown rustling and his first sharp eyes gleaming.

The 2nd Chapter.
The Heavy Hand.
School was assembled in Big Hall. The heroes of the Fourth came in very quietly, anxious not to catch the glancing eye of Mr. Manders, and the rival factions were both showing signs of damage. That little scrag in the passage had left its marks upon Mr. Manders, and he had never to mind being "jumped upon" by Mr. Manders. Mr. Manders had no sympathy whatever for the rival of the two sides of Rockwood, and he looked with a frowning eye on the endless scraps between the juniors. Mr. Manders was a great believer in severe methods. He was never likely to spoil the child by sparing the rod.

It was a considerable time since Mr. Manders had been a boy himself, and he had quite forgotten that he had ever had a mother, or that he ever had been a boy at all. Jimmy Silver's opinion was that he never had.

Jimmy Silver maintained that the "modern wastes" of course, must have had some young days ever so long ago—Mr. Manders had been a rounded little prig, with a microscope; but what you'd call a boy at all. Be that as it may, certainly Mr. Manders was quite without sympathy for exultant boyhood work.

Nothing ever escaped Mr. Manders' glittering eyes. As the Rockwood fellows lined up in their places in Hall he noted that Jimmy Silver's nose was swollen, and that Lovell was blinking his left eye, and that Raby was unexpectantly crossing his ear. He made a mental note of those circumstances.

There was considerable surprise among the Rockwood fellows. They did not know what they had been called together for. Mr. Manders was not a man to be trifled with. They knew that. Doubtless what he had to say referred to the absence of the Fourth Form, which was generally the case. At least, could not see what business that was of Mr. Manders'. As Jimmy Silver whispered indignantly to Lovell, surely the schoolmaster was not going to ask them to study sticks instead of Latin. That would be a little too thick.

"All serene, old son," murmured Jimmy Silver, and there was a shudder in the Fourth, of which the good-tempered Bulkeley discreetly took no notice.

Mr. Manders addressed the school in his sharp, metallic voice. He told them that they were aware—as indeed they were—that the Head of the school had ordered that the Classical side were laid up with influenza. But he went on to tell them something of which they were not aware.

And there were harder lines to follow. When the prefects came out from their interview with Mr. Manders, Bulkeley called to the Fictical Four.

"You're wanted, you young scamps."
"Not Manders!" asked Jimmy Silver in alarm.
"Yes, Go into the Head's study."
"Mr. Manders is there?"
"Mr. Manders is there," answered the prefects, who had just taken possession of the Head's study. With lugubrious faces Jimmy Silver & Co. made their way to that dreaded study. Mr. Manders' aspect, as they entered did not reassure them. The science-master had a cane in his hand, and was evidently waiting for them.

"Hah!" said Mr. Manders, his sharp eyes glittering at the four. "You're wanted, you young scamps, for your holiness in the passage. You collided with me—me! Now that you are here, you may as well be carrying that kind of conduct not permitted; that I will not have the House turned into a bear-garden. I trust your boys will be carrying to others. Hold out your hands!"
"Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!"
"I have my eyes you?"
"The four juniors went. In the passage they tucked their hands under their eyes, and they were walking and looked at one another with feelings too deep for words. Mr. Manders was beginning his new reign with a heavy hand."

The 3rd Chapter.
Under His Thumb!
The Fourth Form were in their room writing.

Lessons were beginning later than usual that morning. First lesson, in fact, had been out. Second lesson was geography. The Fourth Formers all took that lesson—Moderns as well as Classics—so the whole of the Fourth was together. Mr. Manders was not to be taken by a prefect, like the other Lower Forms. Bulkeley, or Neville, or any of the fellows of the Sixth, they supposed.

And the cheerful young ragsals were all looking at the prefect who might venture to "pull the leg" of the senior placed in charge of them. Of course, a prefect was a prefect, but they were all sure to expect the Fourth to treat him exactly like a master.

But if Bulkeley will shall have to "pull the line," said Lovell. "But 'Fellows is rather an ass. If it's 'Fellows, we shall have an easy time of it."
The door opened, and a big Sixth Form came in. The Fourth started at him. It was the Modern prefect in charge of the Fourth, and he felt that it was a leg-up for the Moderns, though they didn't like Knowles personally. But the Classics were not to be trifled with, and he felt that it was a leg-up for the Moderns, though they didn't like Knowles personally. But the Classics were not to be trifled with, and he felt that it was a leg-up for the Moderns, though they didn't like Knowles personally.

"Sit down!"
"Mayn't I speak?" said Jimmy Silver. "I only want to know if you are taking the class. Knowles?"
"Yes, class, you see," answered Knowles.
"But why can't we have one of our own prefects?" demanded Jimmy Silver warmly.
Knowles smiled sarcastically.
"You're welcome to ask Mr. Manders. I dare say he will listen to your opinion on the subject with proper respect, Silver."

"Then sit down, and take fifty lines for impertinence."
"Oh!"
"I intend to keep order in this class," said Knowles, with a grim look. "Your own prefects are a good deal too easy with you, in my opinion. I don't intend to stand any of your nonsense. Now we'll get on to the charge of Modern prefect. Knowing the feeling of the juniors as he did. But it was Mr. Manders' way of showing his own opinion that differed from his own. And the bully of the Sixth had, as a matter of fact, offered his services.

When they came out of the Form-room, they had an opportunity of getting the Classical Fourth under his thumb. He had some little scores to pay on the subject, and he was glad when he had meddled with boys on the Classical side. Bulkeley had very much to say about it. Now they were under his authority, and Bulkeley had no power to interfere. And Knowles made his authority felt that morning.

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"Blessed if I don't wish Bootles would get well all of a sudden!" growled Lovell. "We're going to be under his thumb till he comes back at some."
"Pretty precise," murmured Jimmy Silver.
"If he rags us more than that there'll be trouble, that's all!"
"I don't think so," answered the Fictical Four in the afternoon. Mr. Bootles had been rather an easy-going master, but there was nothing easy-going about him now. He was quite up to the Form work. The Classics would have forgiven him if he had been a little more of a tyrant. He made them work harder than their own Form-master had done.

And he had a petty, sharp way of fault-finding that he had been expatriating. It was as if he had been deliberately looking for trouble, he could not have worked it better. It was not surprising that towards the end of less than a paper pellet, soaked with ink, flew through the air from the desk of the Fictical Four, and struck Knowles on the ear. It was very disrespectful, but it came from a youth who was fed up.

"Can't sneak, you know?"
"Hold out your hand!"
"Hooked! jumped up in his place."
"Please, Knowles, I threw it!" he said.
"Oh, you did, did you?" said Knowles. "Come here, Hooked!"
"Now the other hand!" Swish!
"Take two hundred lines, and stay in your room. Write them out. Get back to your place."
"Oh!" growled Hooked, as he went back to his place. He wished he had been quite so good a marksman.

"Now hold out your hand, Silver!"
"My thumb is hurt!"
"Yes. You refused to obey me. I am going to teach you obedience!"
"Hold out your hand at once!"
"My thumb is hurt!"
"Very much against the grain to be caused by a Modern prefect, especially as he hadn't deserved it. He did not wait for him to make up his mind. He seized him by the collar, swung him round, and the cane sang through the air."
"Whack, whack, whack!"
"Oh, ow, ow, ow!" roared Silver.
"Stop!"
"Whack, whack, whack!"
The cane rang across Jimmy Silver's forehead, and cracked like a pistol. The junior wriggled in Knowles' strong grip, and roared.

Jimmy Silver squirmed awfully, and lowered the cane.
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"You'll get it a bit thicker next time," said Knowles. "I'll keep your name in mind, or I'll know the reason why!"
Knowles did keep order. He kept it so thoroughly that by the time the school was dismissed the Fictical Four was longing to "scrag" him. And the sneering smile with which Knowles looked at the juniors in the Form-room at last expatriated them more than anything else.

Jimmy Silver's opinion was that he was teaching the Classical juniors their place, and bringing them to heel. But there was trouble brewing.

The 4th Chapter.
The Fourth Form Protest.
The end study in the junior passage was crammed. The study in the passage was crammed. The study in the passage was crammed. The study in the passage was crammed.

Everybody in the study and outside was talking at once. It was an indignation meeting, and the indignation was unbounded. There was enough and to spare. "The rotten Modern cad!"
"Why can't we have our own prefects?"
"The Moderns is a rotter!"
"Knowles is a worm!"
"We're not going to stand it!"
"Britons never shall be slaves!"
"Gentlemen!" shouted Jimmy Silver, mounting upon a chair. "Here we are, yelled Lovell and Raby and Newsome, loyally backing up their chum.
"Gentlemen, this meeting has been called for a rotten Modern cad."
"Your row!" said Townsend.
"Shut up!"
"It's a council of war!"
"If that silly ass interrupts again give him some!"
"We don't want to hear these fellows talking!"
"By gad!" said Townsend. "Look here, you're a new kid. I've got you too much to say. I think you've got a leg up on your own back!"
"Knowles that cheeky ass off that chair!" exclaimed Topham.
"And then Topham relaxed into every other form of abuse."
"Gentlemen," repeated Jimmy Silver victoriously. "I say, this is a council of war! We are not going to stand it!"
"Hear, hear!"
"Never!"

"Well, hardly ever!" murmured Raby.

"Silence for the choir!" said Mr. Manders.

"Manders!" pursued Jimmy Silver. He was interrupted by deep groans for Manders. "Manders has no business to prefer over us."

"Shame!"

"It's a rotten shame! But if he was a decent chap we wouldn't grumble."

"A voice!" "Wouldn't it, young Thompson?"

"No, we wouldn't, young Thompson. At least, we shouldn't make a rag of it. But he isn't a decent chap."

"The cad is a Modern!"

"What all that Modern crowd are like—"

"We're going with the Moderns!" chorused the meeting.

"And Knowles has always been trying to clap in and worry us, same as he does the kids on his side, but old Bulkeley has always stood up and stopped him."

"Bulkeley?"

"But now he's got us under his thumb. Manders has planted him in."

"Why couldn't he give us Bulkeley?"

"Bulkeley's taking the Shell," said Hooker.

"Well, then, there's Neville. I suppose Neville could take us quite as well as that cad Knowles—"

"Hear, hear!"

"We're not going to stand it."

"Manders has made a mistake"

"Why, he'd lek us!" said Lovell at last. "He believes in linkings, the beast."

"Want utter rot!" said Topham.

"Shut up, Topham! That's my idea," said Jimmy Silver. "The fact is, Manders has done this without thinking. I shouldn't wonder if that cad Knowles has got round him, so as to get a chance at us. If we—the whole Form—point it out to him, he ought to see his mistake and make a change. We'll agree to be like lambs if he lets us have one of our own projects. He ought to see it."

"He ought," said Lovell doubtfully.

"But he won't," said Newcome.

"Anybody got a better idea to suggest?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Nobody had."

"Well, it's settled that we're going to do something. We're not going to stand Knowles and his bullying."

"Never!"

"Then we ought to protest to Mr. Manders before—before taking other measures," said Silver determinedly.

"If the protest doesn't work, we'll jolly well srag Knowles."

Four-Formers crowded round him to help in the literary composition.

"How are you going to begin?" said Lovell.

"He ain't the Head!" said Jones minor.

"Please him to call him Head, though," said Lovell slyly. "After all, we want to get on his right side."

"Good!" said Jimmy Silver.

"We'll begin," Doar and respected Head, "that ought to please him for a start. Next—"

"We ain't going to staid Knowles at any price," suggested Thompson.

"Fiehead!"

"Well, that's putting it straight."

"A little bit more straight for Manders," said Jimmy Silver.

"We've got to butter him a bit. No good getting his back up at the start."

Jimmy Silver chewed the handle of the pen for a while. The idea of sending a protest to the temporary Head was a ripping one. But when it came to drawing it up, there seemed to be certain difficulties. Getting Mr. Manders' back up was only likely to make matters worse. And

with the Greatest respect against being put with a Modern, respect which does not understand our Ways. With the greatest respect we call your respected attention to this Fact, and hoping that you will be kind enough to give us one of our own projects instead of Knowles, who is a Beast.—We remain Respectfully yours.

"Now we all sign it," said Jimmy Silver. "I think that ought to please him, if anything could. He can't say it isn't respectful enough."

"Isn't there an 'e' in greatest?" asked Lovell dubiously.

"Well, I've not one."

"But isn't there another?"

"I don't think so. But you can put one if you like," said Jimmy Silver liberally. "I don't mind."

"That's a good bit about not being able to work so hard as we should like," said Raby thoughtfully. "That ought to touch his heart."

"And it's giving him the straight about Knowles," said Jimmy Silver.

"Of course, he must know that Knowles is a beast, as he's on the Modern side, and sees him every day."

"Well, we don't mind a row, do we?"

"I do!" snapped Townsend.

"You can go and eat cake!"

"Here's Dubbs."

Lovell brought Dubbs into the study, looking somewhat alarmed. "Dubbs has just suggested that he had been captured for the purpose of a ragging. Jimmy Silver hastened to relieve his fears.

"What's your name? Take this paper to the Head's study, Dubby. Give it to Mr. Manders if he's there, and if he isn't, put it on his desk. And there's a damn you."

"O'right, Master Silver."

Dubbs disappeared with the protest. Jimmy Silver suggested that he should anxiously in the end study. What effect would that document have upon Mr. Manders? Jimmy Silver could not see how he could reasonably find fault with it. But suppose he chose to be unreasonable—like a Modern beast?

"Well, we're not for it now," said Lovell comfortingly. "After all, we had to do something. We can't stand Knowles."

"I-I wonder if he'll send an answer?" murmured Newcome.

"He ought to."

"Can you see Dubbs coming, you chaps?"

Dubbs did not appear to be coming. A quarter of an hour passed. Then footsteps were heard in the passage.

But it was not Dubbs. It was Bulkeley, who had just started in at the anxious crowd of juniors. His brow was very stern.

"Oh, you're all here!" he said grimly.

"Yes-ee. Anything the matter?" ventured Jimmy Silver.

"You've been sending Mr. Manders an idiotic paper."

"A—a protest," corrected Jimmy.

"You're young asses! You're all going to his study every day with an idiot who signed the paper—at once!"

"I-I say, Bulkeley, is he in a bad temper?"

"You'll soon see."

The captain of Bookwood strode away. The juniors looked at one another with rather dismayed glances. Was it possible that Mr. Manders had taken offence, after all, at that carefully-worded and respectful protest?

"I told you so!" mumbled Townsend.

"There's going to be an awful row!"

"Oh rats," said Jimmy Silver uneasily. "I don't see why there should be any row. Of course, he wants to see us to give us an answer."

"Yes-ee, perhaps that's it," said Lovell, brightening up.

"Of course that's it," said Jimmy Silver. "Anyway, we've got to go. Come on, and for goodness' sake don't look like a set of boiled ovals, if you can help it."

The Classical Fourth made their way to the Head's study. They were very doubtful about their reception, but they tried to be cheerful. Jimmy Silver tapped gently on the door.

"Come in!" said Mr. Manders' grinding voice.

The juniors marched in. The first glance at Mr. Manders was sufficient to show that, for some unknown reason, he had taken offence at the protest. There was a heavy frown on his brow, and his thin lips were set tightly. He looked grimly over the crowd of worried juniors.

"Well, what have you to say?"

"And you take it upon yourselves," said Mr. Manders, his eyes glittering, "to criticise the arrangements I have made for the ragging. You yourselves to dictate to your master what he shall do? You dare to apply opprobrious epithets to the prefect I have chosen to be in charge of it?"

The juniors were silent with dismay. Mr. Manders had such an unenviable reputation for his things. They hadn't meant it like that at all. But that was how Mr. Manders had taken it.

"Well, what have you to say?" demanded Mr. Manders, in a thunderous voice which made the Fourth-Formers start.

"S-s-say, sir!" stammered Jimmy Silver.

"Yes. Have you anything to say before I choose you for your unexampled impudence?"

"I—I—we—we we hope you'll let



"You can go and eat cake!" said Jimmy Silver deliberately. "You're a rotten bully, Knowles! You're a Modern cad! I won't be caned, and if you bring that cane near me, I'll shy an inkpot at you!"

"My hat!"

"But my idea is that Manders, as a sensible chap, will see it. We only want justice—strict justice. We'll draw up the protest, and sign it all round, and take it to him—alone! or put it in his study, or send the page with it. Perhaps that would be best. Then he'll have time to read it over calmly."

"I won't sign it," yelled Townsend.

"You'll get a thick ear if you don't," said Silver. "We're all in this together. If any rotten funk sticks out, it will show we're not unanimous. Every fellow in the Classical Fourth will sign the paper of his own free will, or else he'll have a licking."

"Hear, hear!"

"Look here—" began Townsend.

"Sit on him, somebody!"

The unfortunate Townsend was sat upon again, and vanished under Huby and Newcome, gurgling. Townsend's objections having been thus disposed of, Jimmy Silver sat down at the table with pen and paper. The

back of the sharp-tempered master was no likely to go up unless the protesters were very tactful. It was really a difficult business, and the meeting debated it very seriously.

The 5th Chapter.

Not a Success!

Jimmy Silver, having demolished a considerable portion of the pen-hub, started at last. On a nice clean sheet of input paper—which had a blot or two on it by the time he had finished—he drew up the protest, added at every other word by suggestions from his chums.

"Dear and respected Head—With the greatest respect, we, the undersigned members of the IVth Form, beg to point out that it would be only the right thing, under the present circumstances, to put a Classical Prefect in Charge of Classical claps. Knowles of the Vth, being a Beast, we feel that we cannot work so hard as we should like, which is the object of all of us being here for that purpose. We beg to protest humbly and

"Share in your names," said Lovell.

The juniors signed one after another. Having reached the bottom of the sheet, before the signatures were concluded, they continued to sign wherever they could find room for their names. The aspect of the document began to grow quite striking.

Townsend and Topham declined to sign. But they were persuaded to sign after the rest. The method of persuasion was simple and effective. Their ears were twisted until they signed. As Jimmy Silver declared, it was necessary for the whole Form to be unanimous in the subject to lend weight to their protest.

"That's finished!" said Jimmy Silver, with much satisfaction.

"Now some of you went after Dubbs about bring him here."

Dubbs was the page. Three or four juniors rushed away in search of him. Justifiable and respectful as that protest was, nobody was anxious to be the bearer of it to Mr. Manders.

"There'll be a row over this," growled Townsend.

Groans for Manders.

"What's the good of backing up, as we're doing against Huby and Prizans and beast of that kind, if we're going to strike the blow to a rotten Modern?" roared Jimmy Silver.

"Hurrah!"

"Might as well knuckle under to the Kaiser, and have done with it."

Groans for the Kaiser.

"I put it to the meeting—Are we going to stand it?"

"Never."

"Hear, hear!"

"I'm not for putting our foot down!" shouted Jimmy Silver, warming with his own eloquence.

"The Fourth has got to back up upon this. Now then, side if you make it for putting our hands down—I mean, hands up for putting our foot down—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't be like! This isn't a cackling game. Hands up for resting legs!"

Hands went up on all sides. Some of the juniors, in their enthusiasm, put up both hands. Townsend and Topham looked their best at their pockets. Lovell took the inkpot from the table, and looked at them. Topham and Topham put up their hands with remarkable suddenness. The meeting was evidently unanimous.

"Good!" said Jimmy Silver, surveying the excited meeting with gleaming eyes. "Everybody agrees that something's got to be done."

"Hear, hear!"

"And we've got to do it. I've got an idea. But I won't shove it on you. Anybody who's got a suggestion to make as we come to stand it."

There was a buzz of voices at once. The suggestions were many and varied. Hooker was of opinion that Knowles ought to be hauled in oil. Unanimous assent, but voted unpracticable. Jones minor suggested lynch—another good idea, but as impracticable as the first.

"Well, here's my idea."

"Blow your idea," said Townsend.

"We don't want ideas from new kids," said Raby. Townsend's last ejaculation was caused by Newcome sitting on him suddenly. He disappeared into the armchair.

"Mr. Silver," a protest signed by all the Form.

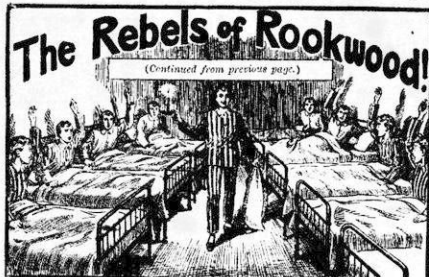
"Let of notice. Knowles would take of his side," said Raby.

"Join for Knowles, fiehead."

"Who, then?"

"My hat!"

There was silence in the crowded meeting room. The Fourth-Formers next were, and they were not idle. But the idea of protesting to Mr. Manders, temporary Head of the Form, was a terrible thing. Mr. Manders was a terrible man, and the Head's mantle had fallen on his shoulders.



The Rebels of Rookwood

We have one of our own prefects to take the Fourth, as--

"What!"

"Knuckles is a rotten bully, you see, sir, and he's down in our Class, and--"

"Silence!" You desire, apparently, to add impertinence to impertinence, outrage to outrage. Pelton poked upon Osa. "And Mr. Manders. Although a Modern master, Mr. Manders could surely make classical allusions. "Well, this impertinence will not be allowed to pass. I am surprised, I am shocked to discover the slackness that exists on this side of the school. I hope to root it out. I shall spare no exertion to that end. I shall care every boy severely who has placed his signature upon this ridiculous and disrespectful document."

"If you please, sir, it isn't disrespectful. If--you read it, sir, you--you'll see that we say "With the greatest respect, sir," stammered Silver.

"Hold out your hand, Silver! I will punish you first, and most severely, as I believe you are the ringleader of this ridiculous affair. We're all in it, sir, just the same," said Lovell.

"Silence! Come here, Silver!" Jimmy Silver was a tough youngster, and, indeed, as hard as nails, but he was quite pale when Mr. Manders had finished with him. He speared his hands under his arms and breathed hard with anguish.

One after another the unhappy prefects went through it. Townsend attempted a feeble explanation that he really hadn't had anything to do with it. Unfortunately for Townsend, Mr. Manders regarded that as a guilty excuse, and gave him an extra cut. Topham did not attempt any excuse after that example.

Mr. Manders looked his care at last. He was breathing rather hard himself, not being accustomed to exertion.

"You may go," he said. "Let there be no more of this insolence!" He tossed the protest into the study fire, and understood no more. Knuckles will remain in charge of you until Dr. Chisholm returns. Let there be no angry disputes, any disorder in the Fourth Form, and you will hear from me. Remember that! Go!"

And they went, and were weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in the junior studies for a good hour afterwards. The protest of the Fourth had been a costly failure. There could not be the slightest doubt about that. Carefully as it had been worked, somehow or other it had put Mr. Manders' back up.

"We're not beaten yet," gasped Jimmy Silver, after a chorus of woe from the study. "We're not going to stand Knuckles."

"Oh," growled Lovell. "Knuckles is better than that other idea--"

"I'll think of another idea--" said the three chums glared at him. "Bump that other, anyway," said Jimmy Silver, "You can't handle him if you can't handle Knuckles."

Tommy Dodd held up his hand in a gesture of protest. "I've contemplated it," "Yes," he said. "I wasn't grating. I'm really sorry. Knuckles is rather a card, and he'll down on you

tingled whenever he thought of that protest. "Not much good," he agreed. "But we can't stand it much longer." "What's to be done?"

That was a question that Jimmy Silver could not answer. "It was not a fancied wrong that the juniors laboured under. They didn't like being the Modern prefect, certainly. But they could have stood that. But Knuckles was not to be stood. Lightly, and then there was pretty certain to be an outbreak sooner or later in the Fourth Form-room. But that only meant more trouble and more punishment for Mr. Manders, armed with the full authority of the Head."

Jimmy Silver & Co. thought it over and could not say any cut. Jimmy Silver looked in at Bulkeley's study that evening. Old Bulkeley could not understand and Silver knew that he had noticed Knuckles' manners and customs, and guessed that he disapproved of them.

"No, sir," said Bulkeley, looking rather grim. Neville and Fellowes, who were having tea with him, looked less cheerful than usual. Mr. Manders' rule did not seem to produce general satisfaction at Rookwood.

"Well, what is it, kid?" asked Bulkeley, not unkindly. "Jimmy Silver hesitated a moment, and coloured. Then he plunged into the subject boldly."

"Look here, Bulkeley, we can't stand Knuckles. He's a beast. You know that that we ought to have a Classical prefect over him while Mr. Bootles is away. Would you speak up for us?"

"No, sir," said Bulkeley. "But Mr. Manders would have to take notice of what you said!" exclaimed Silver eagerly. "You're captain now, and he's showing the true inwardness of his unpleasant nature. It pleased him very much to annoy Bulkeley."

Jimmy Silver & Co. had not said did not approve of his position in the Fourth Form-room, and that the good-natured captain of Rookwood was annoyed by the "grudging" of the juniors under Knuckles' rule. And it was one of Knuckles' amiable objects to annoy Bulkeley."

But for Bulkeley, Knuckles would have everything in his hands. He was up against Bulkeley, though the unsuspecting captain of Rookwood did not quite understand it.

Knuckles was specially down on the Fictical Four in the class-room, but all the Classical Fourth-Formers felt the weight of his hand. The Moderns did not wholly escape for that matter. Knuckles was a bully of the first water, and with such ample opportunities for bullying, he let himself go.

At ten that evening in the gym study the Fictical Four were very gloomy. Mr. Bootles would have been flattered could he have known that earnestness his Form longed for his recovery and return to his post. But Mr. Bootles was not likely to recover just yet. They had to stand Knuckles."

"There'll be trouble," said Jimmy Silver, hesitatingly. "The old bird liked me twice today. I know I shall hit out soon."

And he gazed the lot of us for Saturday," growled Lovell. "And loaded us up with lines!" said Ruby.

"It's not to be stood. Prefecting to Manders isn't my good," said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. Lovell mused grimaces. His hands

"Of course, I'm the best judge of that," said Knuckles calmly. Bulkeley coughed. "Oh, of course! But if I might make a suggestion--I'd go rather easy with the kids. I can't help noticing that the kicking seem to be rather frequent, and I've seen that they are galled for Saturday. That's a bit thick, don't you think so?"

"Of course, I don't want to interfere, as Mr. Manders has put you in charge of the Fourth," said Bulkeley. "In an effort. Of course, you'll use your own judgement."

"Of course," asserted Knuckles. "But Mr. Manders would have no more to say, the Modern captain went into the Fourth Form class-room. He was smiling. It pleased him very much to display his power before Bulkeley, to know that the Rookwood captain longed to interfere, and had no power to do so."

But the strain on the tempers of Jimmy Silver & Co. was perilously near breaking point now. The Modern juniors had gone off to have their German lesson from Herr Knuckles, and he remained at the tender mercies of Knuckles. Never had the Modern prefect been so obnoxious. His sneers and fault-finding had never been so much to the fore.

I shall go for him with an inkpot soon," Jimmy Silver whispered desperately to Lovell.

Then Knuckles's voice roared out: "Silver!"

"Knuckles!" "You were speaking to Lovell!" "Yes, Knuckles."

"Take a hundred lines!" "That makes six hundred!" said Jimmy Silver recklessly. "Hadn't you better make it a thousand while you're about it, Knuckles?"

Knuckles frowned. "Come out here, Silver!"

Jimmy Silver sat tight. He had been through once last afternoon, and his pains were smarting and his temper was at boiling-point.

"What for?" he asked. "To be caned, of course!" snapped Knuckles. "Don't be a fool! Come out here, and clear it once!"

Jimmy Silver did not move. "Do you hear me?" "Yes, Knuckles." "Well, you do us, I tell you?" roared the prefect.

"No, Knuckles." "What?" "You can go and eat coke!" said Jimmy Silver deliberately, feeling that he was in for it now, and that he might as well have his money's worth.

"You're a worn!" "I won't be caned! And if you bring that cane near me, I'll kick an inkpot for you!"

Knuckles stood gasping with astonishment and rage. This was nutting, a vengeance. The whole of the Fourth burst into a laugh, and enjoyed hearing Jimmy Silver talk to Knuckles.

The Modern prefect stood poked to the floor for some moments. Then he made a jump at Jimmy Silver. He caught him by the collar to drag him off his seat into a lavatory, but Jimmy Silver had whipped out the inkpot.

and a stream of ink dashed into the Sixth Former's face.

"Groosh!" panted Knuckles, charging.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Then Knuckles simply hurled himself on the nutting. He grasped Jimmy Silver by the collar and pulled the desk face downwards, and started with the cane. Whack, whack, whack!

Jimmy Silver's yell rang through the Form-room. Knuckles was thrashing him with terrific energy. Silver kicked and yelled and struggled furiously.

"You've won! Help! Rescue!" Lovell & Co. were shouting. He was going to stand that, but--

"Let him go, Knuckles!" Knuckles's reply was a lash with the cane which caught Lovell across the shoulder.

Lovell needed no more. He made a spring at Knuckles, and lugged him in the chest. The prefect staggered away. Lovell yelled to his comrades:

"Back up! Down the cad!" "Let's see a bit of this!" All discipline in the Fourth Form-room was at an end. Like hounds rushing on their prey, the juniors rushed upon Knuckles, and he felt that he was disappearing under a swarm of excited Classical.

The 7th Chapter

Knuckles Caught Through It.

"Help! Oh! Oh! Gerroff! Help! Yow!" This Knuckles!

Jimmy Silver, white with pain, panted and gasped, and began to stagger into the fray. The prefect was struggling ferociously under the swarm of juniors, and he was getting off with all his force, and two or three of his diminutive assailants rolled away with loud yells. But the numbers were too many and he was slowly being overhauled.

"Go! the cad!" howled Ruby. "Go! the cad!" howled Raby. "Give him the frogmarch!" "Rag him!"

"Ink him!" The Moderns were reckless now. They were in for it, and all their wrongs were to be avenged at one fell swoop. Jimmy Silver caught up an inkpot and cheerfully poured it over Knuckles' upturned neck and furious face. The Modern prefect gasped and spluttered.

"Oh! You young villain! Ow! Ooooh! I'll have you flogged for this! Groosh!"

Jimmy Silver hit the frog's march! "Hurrah!"

"Let me go!" screamed Knuckles. "Let me go!" shrieked Knuckles. Another flowing ink stopped the prefect's utterance suddenly, and he spluttered again.

His down-pour of hands grasped him, and he was frogmarched up and down the Form-room. Bump, bump, bump!

"You, ow! Help!"

Two or three of the Fourth were remaining in their seats, looking scared. But shortly all the fellows were backing up the Fictical Four. They had all suffered from Knuckles, and they were all fed up. They wanted justice, and they wanted it badly. Of the consequences they did not think for the moment. They were too excited for that. They frogmarched Knuckles up and down the Form-room till every bone in his body was aching.

"Oh! You young villain!" howled the prefect. "I'll have you flogged! I'll have you socked! Ow! I'll report you to Mr. Manders!"

"You're going to report us?" asked Jimmy Silver, with deadly coolness. "And get you flogged!" "And get you flogged!"

"Yes!"

"Then you may as well smart for it in the nick of time, Jimmy Silver!" "This is where you get it in the neck, you rotten bully!"

"Show him your teeth, kid!" said Jimmy. "He's mighty handy with that cane. He can see who's like him--"

"Hurrah!"

"Let me go!" "Let me go!" I'll knock you for it! You old Knuck! In the grip of many hands, the body of the Sixth was dragged to the nearest desk, and pitched upon it, and held fast by downward. Jimmy Silver seized the cane, which Knuckles had used upon him with such effect, and dashed it over his head. The prefect could scarcely believe the evidence of his eyes. That juniors would dare to handle him, a prefect, in this way was more than he had ever believed the evidence of the cane.

ANOTHER GRAND BUMPER NUMBER OF "THE BOYS' FRIEND" NEXT MONDAY! It will contain a magnificent long complete school tale of JIMMY SILVER & Co., Entitled, "BARRED OUT!" - By OWEN CONQUEST. THERE WILL ALSO BE PRESENTED FEW OTHER BEAUTIFUL ART PICTURE. - ORDER EARLY 1/-

If you want the BEST, buy only Your Editor's papers, They contain can be obtained, The BEST reading matter for boys that

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

I would like all my readers to look upon me as their real friend, someone to whom they can come for help and advice when they are in doubt or difficulty. It is never "too much trouble" to me to be of use to my boy and girl friends if they feel they would like to write to me. . . .



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 readers who write to me, and enclose a stamped envelope or postcard, may be sure of receiving a prompt and kindly reply by post. All letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

A GREETING TO ALL MY CHUMS.

Now that the long-talked-of Bumper Number of THE BOYS' FRIEND is an accomplished fact, I take the opportunity of extending a cordial and sincere welcome to my vast and ever-growing circle of readers.

I am sure that the superb number which is now in your hands will exceed all expectations, and justify to the full all that has been claimed of it. Every page of good, wholesome, and uplifting literature will readily and cheerfully admit that no finer pennyworth has ever yet been placed on the market.

MORE TO FOLLOW!

But the present great number is not the beginning and the ending of this gigantic treat—not by any manner of means. The ensuing weeks will bring before my delighted readers many other fine features, and I want every British boy and girl to rally round and give their enthusiastic support to this colossal undertaking.

NEXT WEEK'S FEATURES.

If one were to attempt to single out the cream of next Monday's superb attractions, the honours would probably be divided between the

WONDERFUL COLOURED COVER.

which depicts a scene in Arthur S. Hardy's great boxing yarn, and the

MAGNIFICENT PRESENTATION PLATE.

showing a thrilling battle on the sea. This great picture is the original work of one of our leading artists, and has only been secured at considerable expense. As other splendid free plates are to follow, my chums will find it an excellent plan to retain each plate as it appears, and afford words have them all framed and kept as a permanent souvenir of the greatest crisis in history.

I will not be too long-winded in describing the remainder of next Monday's ripping features. Suffice it to say that in category and general excellence they will not fall one whit short of those contained in this great issue.

There will, of course, be another magnificent long complete story of the rivals of Rookwood School, entitled

"HARRIED OUT!" By Owen Conquest.

As its title suggests, this story deals with a breathless escapade on the part of Jimmy Silver & Co., the most popular schoolboy characters of the present day; and I may confidently affirm that in no tale dealing with school life which it has fallen to my lot to read has the interest and excitement been so strongly marked and sustained.

"THE HIDDEN WORLD!" By Reginald Wray.

Another great Bumper Number Next Monday. Coloured Cover, and our 2nd Splendid Free Presentation Plate. Order your copy at once.

Arthur S. Hardy. Then there will be the great detective story, introducing Harry Kewen, first and foremost in the long line of famous investigators.

There is not a dull line in next week's fine array of reading matter, moreover, I challenge any other journal for boys published at one penny to produce such a right-down ripping good number.

One has little to look forward to in these days, when so-called patriots set to work to suppress manly sport, thus robbing a boy of untold enjoyment; and this is where THE BOYS' FRIEND steps in with its stirring serials and splendid complete stories.

Next Monday's issue, coming as it does at a time of unrest and discord, will be a boon and a godsend to all who read it.

A "MUDDIED OAF."

Several of my chums have written to me at various times asking for an explanation of this curious phrase.

It is borrowed from the poem called "The Islanders," which Rudyard Kipling contributed to "The Times" some years ago. In this poem Mr. Kipling inveighs against Great Britain's shirkiness in teaching her sons how to ride and shoot, seemingly content with the fact that they become expert in the art of playing cricket and football. He refers to the fact that, when we found the Boers hard nuts to crack, we "fawned on the Younger Nations"

YOUR EDITOR.

- CONTROLLER OF:
 "THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1d. Every Monday.
 "THE MACNET" LIBRARY, 1d. Every Monday.
 "THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1d. Every Wednesday.
 "THE DREADNOUGHT," 1d. Every Thursday.
 "THE PENNY POPULAR," 1d. Every Friday.
 "CHUCKLES," PRICE 1d. Every Saturday.

meaning, of course, the Colonies—for good horsemen and shots, and "Then ye returned to your trials, then ye courted your souls."

With the fannelled boots at the wicket or the muddled oafs at the goals?"

There is no doubt a great deal of truth in Kipling's onslaught on our methods. There ought to be railways everywhere, and all young fellows should be taught how to ride. I fancy, however, that the present war found us better prepared than did the South African campaign; and it would be grossly unfair to apply the term "muddled oafs" to the brave lads who are now engaged in paving the way for the triumphal march into Berlin.

"THE BRAVE THAT ARE NO MORE."

Those of my readers whose are and domestic circumstances have rendered it possible for them to serve with the Colonies are playing a great and noble part in the present mighty conflict. The spirit of discipline and sportsmanship which THE BOYS' FRIEND has always been quick to foster is bearing rich and glorious fruit on the stern fields of duty.

Since last summer the names of many fallen heroes who formerly read THE BOYS' FRIEND have been filtering in, and up to the time of going to press I have had details of over two hundred brave fellows who have made the supreme sacrifice for their country. In that long list are names of the finest, the most gifted, the most lovable young fellows we have ever known, and one feels that the nation can never repair their loss.

But this is no time for mourning. We should rather admire, and admiring, seek to imitate the firmness of soul, the readiness to dare and to die for the sake of doing and doing, which these young heroes have shown by their splendidly unselfish example.

A CALL TO ARMS!

CHUMS and comrades, far and near, Listen to your chief's good cheer!

Now our Bumper Number's here, Rally Round the FRIEND!

Readers who, long years ago, Read our tales with hearts aglow, Can you now be slackers? NO! Rally Round the FRIEND!

Boys who join our ranks to-day, stalwarts who have come to stay, Pull together—that's the way! Rally Round the FRIEND!

Ye who rejoice to the full, Listen to tales of Rookwood School, Bear in mind the golden rule—Rally Round the FRIEND!

Lovers of "The Hidden World" into realms of romance hurled, Let your banner be unfurled! Rally Round the FRIEND!

Though the nations be at war, Drive despair from your door; Spread our fame from shore to shore! Rally Round the FRIEND!

Stori's prizes, splendid Plates, All that please and elate, For you at the bookstall waits, Rally Round the FRIEND!

Boys of Britain, tried and true, Ever true to duty and to you, See? Your chief's has faith in you! Rally Round the FRIEND!

RESULT OF FOOTBALL COMPETITION No. 7.

In the above competition announced in our issue for February 24th, concerning football matches played on February 15th, one competitor succeeded in solving all the pictures and in forwarding the correct results of all the matches which were played.

The prize of £10 which was offered has, therefore, been sent to this competitor, whose name and address is as follows:

Pte. PERKINS, Ward 47, St. Mark's College, King's Road, Chelsea, S.W.

A RUNAWAY. If this paragraph should meet the eye of Dudley W. Raymond, of Bolton-le-Moors, Manchester, he is earnestly requested to return home at once, as his parents are suffering a great deal of anxiety through his foolish action in leaving them. Bringing away from home never yet brought anything but shame and disgrace to any lad; and if sincerely hope Master Raymond will do the manly thing and return home without delay to his anxious parents.

I am meeting this announcement in THE BOYS' FRIEND at the urgent request of Mrs. Raymond.

YOUR EDITOR.

GRAND COMPETITION!

£10 IN CASH PRIZES!

First Prize, £5; Second Prize, £1 10s.; Third Prize, £1; and TEN PRIZES OF FIVE SHILLINGS.

1st Coupon: WHICH IS THEIR COUNTRY? No. 2 Coupon Next Monday.

No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4	No. 5	No. 6

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO. Above will be found two rows of drawings. The top row consists of portrait sketches of men well-known and connected with the countries shown in the bottom row. All competitors have to do is to decide to which country each celebrity belongs. Having come to a decision, write in the space left under each map the number of the celebrity who is connected with the country shown above that space.

READ THE RULES CAREFULLY. Having written in the numbers, keep this form by you, for next week there will be given another set of pictures. Keep your coupons by you, and look out for an announcement in THE BOYS' FRIEND as to where and when entries are to be sent in. There will be eight coupons given altogether.

Another Great Bumper Number Next Monday. Coloured Cover, and our 2nd Splendid Free Presentation Plate. Order your copy at once.

THE 1ST INSTALMENT OF OUR STIRRING ARMY-LIFE STORY.

With a Huge and Bayonet.

By BEVERLEY KENT.



"They're snatching at you!" enquired the old man. "Look at 'em! They've took your measure! and follow 'em. You haven't the pluck! Bah!"

The first chapter. Alone in the World.

The alarm clock rattled loudly, and Tom Bevan threw back the bed-clothes and jumped to the floor. He hastily he shaved, plunged into his tub, and dressed. Then he went down to the shabby sitting-room, where a pot of tea, a loaf of bread, and some butter, were laid for his breakfast. He took his meal hungrily and all the time with his eye on the clock.

"Five minutes yet before I have to start for the office," he murmured, brushing back his chair. "I'll run upstairs and see what sort of a night poor Ethel has had."

"Come in, Tom," a gentle voice replied. He walked into his sister's room. She was sitting up in bed, looking very pale and tired. Tom's face grew long, but he tried to speak cheerily. "You haven't had a grand night, old girl?" he suggested.

"Not very good, Tom. My head keeps still paining me, more from worry than anything else. I think," she replied, "I did hope I should get something out of that advertisement I answered two days ago. It's awful to be—"

"Now, Ethel, for goodness' sake don't worry," Tom urged. "You'll do work soon enough, and meantime just think what your being here means to me when I come back from the office. No grumpy evenings sitting looking into the fire without even a dog to keep me company, but instead I have you to talk to and make jokes with. Why, I'm having the jolliest time in my life since—"

"Since father and mother died! That's what is in your mind, Tom," she interrupted, tears welling into her beautiful eyes. "You're the best brother a sister ever had, but how can I let myself be a drag on you when I can't do any more for you? For three weeks now I've been here. Your expenses have been doubled; you are half-starving yourself!"

to uncle. You must call and give it to him at lunch time."

"He's never helped us; he's never shown that he cares a rap about us," he growled. "Ask me anything else."

She began to sob violently. "You must take it, Tom," she wailed. "You're not asking for anything for yourself. If you earn I'll get up and call on him, sick as I am. I won't be a burden to you any longer. I can't!"

He had dived his hands into his pockets as if thus to keep the letter at bay. If his sister had argued he would have resisted, but here tears overcame him. He could not now refuse.

"Then give me the letter," he said. "And you'll make sure to call?" "Yes, I'll call."

He went down the stairs, and out into the street. His heart was very sore; bitter memories thronged his brain as he strode along; a happy and comfortable childhood broken by the death of his father; his mother's desperate struggles from that on to keep a family home together; till he could support her; then her death, worn out by poverty and privation, leaving him a lad of only seventeen, and Ethel two years younger.

He thought of the misery and loneliness of the two years that followed when he could earn only a few shillings a week, and was without a relation or friend to say even a kindly word, and Ethel in the house of strangers as a children's nurse; then the change in her letters breathing the joy of new life and hope; and the terrible discovery that she had fallen in love with a man utterly unworthy of her; her grief and his own great sorrow when that man sought re-lodgment in a theft, was sent to guard her young life was lighted.

spread over his face, for from a street fifty yards ahead, the strains of a band had carried to him. He knew the air, he knew what was coming; his heart thrilled.

Louder and louder grew the music. There round the corner swung the first file of the gallant lads who had given up home and comfort, and, if needs be, would surrender life gladly to stay the onward ravages of the Hun, and keep the old flag flying.

On they came, all still in civilian clothes, a thousand strong. As they had only joined a few days before, they lacked the steady formation of drilled troops, but they carried themselves bravely for all that.

Every face was alight with a great courage and the stimulus of a great sacrifice, every heart was beating the more steadily now that the plunge had been taken, and from this on they were soldiers, bound to their King by a direct and solemn vow to endure all to face all, to fight to the last.

Tom stopped. How he longed to join them, how he envied them, how since that fateful day when Germany, in her blind arrogance, had challenged Britain to combat, he had been consumed by the desire to enlist. But Ethel! How could he leave her? Was not his case in his hands, his duty begun at home, his solemn promise to his dying mother? Ethel's illness, her total lack of means, her complete dependence upon him, placed, he could not get, but that was hard.

He stood, as if a young Britisher as any passing six feet in height, and with the figure of an athlete, the best sprinter, the best back in his school soccer team, and the biggest snorter on the cricket-field, his eyes ought to be there. He watched them moodily as they swung by and made the weak ring with their thrilling voices.

"Fall in and follow me!" he snapped. "Right! Now, your foot's tramped time. Tom's heart was thumping; a mist was before his eyes through which he saw those marching faces. An old man nudged him. "They're sneering at you!" he snapped. "Look at 'em! They're sneering at you. They've took your measure, Fall in and follow 'em! You haven't the pluck!" Bah!

crutch, and a long multi-coloured sash just over his heart, but he chuckled at many cities, he had fought in the days gone by.

"Fall in and follow me!" he snapped. "Right! Now, your foot's tramped time. Tom's heart was thumping; a mist was before his eyes through which he saw those marching faces. An old man nudged him. "They're sneering at you!" he snapped. "Look at 'em! They're sneering at you. They've took your measure, Fall in and follow 'em! You haven't the pluck!" Bah!

Yes, the leading file had spotted Tom, but he chuckled at him. The cue had been seized. Until all had passed, every face would be turned to him, in every eye would flash a sneer, he had accepted an invitation, half of scorn. The torture was agonising.

He must resist. He could not even lay his case before the old soldier, who by this time was bitter, and who was eager to denounce the man in the crowd on the kerb were laughing at him, too. Oh, heaven, that it should have to endure this! He plunged forward, his shoulders jumped, his face scarlet, only longing to reach the desk, his nerves still shaken and his hand trembling.

A clock close at hand boomed. He started. He should be at his desk by this time. Mr. Clay's employer, was a martinet, and he turned rusty and dismissed him, then Ethel—

Gulping down his misery, he hurried along. Ten minutes later, he was before the open books on his desk, his nerves still shaken and his hand trembling.

All that morning the music of the song was in his ears; the faces of the newly formed unit seemed to be laughing at him from beyond the edge of the desk. Two other clerks were in the office, and from time to time he heard their voices vaguely. He bungled at his work, and had to cast up columns twice before he was more from mechanical practice than ought else, he balanced his figures, and then posted up his ledger from memory again and again, in the interval came. He had forty-five minutes for his dinner.

"Dinner for? You don't want any; his appetite had gone. Perhaps it was just as well. Ethel had spoken with accuracy when she had said he was half-starved, and for the three weeks his dinner had been almost a pretence; the very few pounds he had he was saving to meet the doctor's and other bills, incidental to her illness.

He had he did not want any dinner now, he had full leisure to call on his uncle. Another horrible experience this day, but it must be faced. Taking his hat, he slipped on his shoes.

The office was in Putney, and his uncle lived in Wandsworth. Twenty minutes' foot march would bring him to the house. Tom went in the lift, turned to the left by the railway station, and hurried on.

He came down to Wandsworth High Street, and close to Garrett Lane. His steps began to lag. Old memories began to crowd into his mind, he had seen but little of his uncle, Joshua Hepton, and had never liked him, he was sure, to have seen a boy-woman amongst his relations.

Reputed wealthy, and a miser, he lived in a small dilapidated house out of which he eked out a miserable shadow he flitted occasionally about Wandsworth, mostly at night, late every Saturday night, and he was in his hand, he did his marketing when prices were being reduced before closing; he was unkempt, with a straggling grey beard and furrowed eyes.

hours to clean it up; he never displayed any feeling in family trouble; he never had been known to help a poor neighbour; taciturn and suspicious he kept his friends, and even shunned acquaintances.

Tom began to wonder what his result would be. He did not expect a pleasant one. Perhaps the door would be slammed in his face. He came round a corner, and went down a narrow, old-world street. His uncle's house was at the end, standing back from the road with a patch of grass in front and a garden behind. Tom opened the gate and knocked at the door.

Having waited the minutes he knocked again. Getting no answer, he strolled round towards the back, for an elderly woman had been eyeing him from a window in a house opposite, and her curiosity was obvious and irritating. So few ever called on old Joshua Hepton that a visitor doubtless had created a sensation. As long as Tom stood at the door, she would keep staring at him.

He came round by the side of the house. The garden, covered with weeds, was a little neglected at the back door, and did not get an answer. He touched the latch, and found it was unfastened, and he opened. He stepped into a passage and called aloud.

"Hallo! Hallo! Are you there, Uncle Joshua?" All was silence. He walked along and turned into the sitting-room facing the front door, but the sitting-room was locked. For there, on the hearth, the old man was lying dead, blood still trickling from his face, and a large cash-box lay on the table open and empty.

And at that moment a loud knock came at the hall door, followed in Tom's ears.

The Door Opened.

Forced to enter, Tom rushed towards his uncle as the knocker fell, and colliding with the table, he noticed the cash-box, but impulse was to shout for help, but, realising that a theft had been the cause of the old man's death, that he was alone with him, and that he must be the murderer, he turned to the door of the crime if seen on the premises, he stopped, overwhelmed with consternation. After a moment's thought he unlocked the door, and he looked out through the muslin curtain.

A strong, big man about forty years of age was standing with his back to the door, twirling a heavy black moustache. He was dressed in a good lounge suit, and he had a watch in his hand, and was wearing a new bowler hat. Altogether his appearance was quite in keeping with the middle-class air about it. Tom began to feel hot and cold by turns. The stranger might be a plain-fclothes constable sent to inspect, or he might have looked out through the muslin curtain.

Suddenly the man wheeled round and looked at Tom. He meant to gain an entrance, Tom moved from the window, his face becoming ghastly; never had he imagined he would find himself in such a horrible predicament. If only the man would go. But after waiting nearly couple of minutes, he knocked again.

At last Tom heard him moving from the door, and the great relief that came to him was almost as the instant changed into greater fear. For the stranger did not go down to the gate, he was coming round by the side of the house.

If found in the room after refusing to open the door, what possible cause could he have for being there, except that he was the criminal who had attacked old Joshua Hepton?

Realising this, Tom did not hesitate; he took the only course that presented left to him. Hurrying into the room, he unlocked the front door, opened, he ran down the path and sped away. The woman who had been eyeing him from a window in a house opposite, only too late did he realise that she was a witness too to his precipitate flight.

He fled along the street, and only looked back as he turned the corner. The stranger had come out of the room, and was waiting for him. Now he shouted as Tom dashed round the corner. A bus was passing. The lad jumped into it and sat down. He did not dare look back again.

The bus was travelling fast, and the conductor's attention did not seem to be attracted by the man who, at a time he turned round, took the penny Tom proffered, and, punching

WH BUGLE & BAYONET.

(Continued from previous page.)

and handing him the ticket, he went up the steps whistling, to collect the fare on his way.

He had escaped, and at last he was free to think. But his mind was half dazed; he could hardly believe that he was not suffering from a nightmare. Only twenty minutes before he had been so free from danger as any one of those now passing him. In that brief time the whole trend of his life had changed.

"Though innocent, he might yet be arrested and hanged for murder. Already a search for him was being scientifically undertaken by the police. By wire and telephone the alarm was travelling to every station in London in an hour or two every constable on his beat would be looking for a face answering to the description given by the stranger who had called and followed him and the woman who had seen him from the window. He might be caught by the police and facing the worst. But had he any chance of clearing himself? And Ethel—that a terrible thought was to her he if the first news she got of the tragedy was from the police or the newspapers? If she read that the brother she loved had been arrested, charged with an awful crime? The shock in her weak state of health might prove fatal. No! He must tell her at once.

He got to the house, and opening the door, he went upstairs to her room. To his surprise he was surprised at his return at that hour, she was gazing enquiringly as he walked in. She saw his pale, set face, the agony in his eyes.

"Tom, what's the matter?" she cried.

"Ethel, an awful thing has happened," he said hoarsely. "Old Uncle Joshua is dead. Some one has killed him."

She could not believe him. With eyes round with doubt, she stared.

"It's true," he went on. "I called there, I saw him lying on the floor. I hadn't time to do anything before another man came and took the cash-box was on the table, and my money was gone. I got unnerved. I didn't know what to do. The man who knocked and knocked at the door, afraid to open the door. He came round by the back, and I rushed away."

Now she believed him. Never had she seen him so shaken. She stretched out both her hands as if to shield him.

"Did anyone see you?" she gasped.

"Two people did. The man followed me, but I dodged him."

"Tom, they must catch you. You went on, but I breathed coming sharply. You must hide until all is over."

"How can it be explained?" he asked. "The villain has got away, and I'm sure the police are after me. They wouldn't believe me now."

"You must leave."

"Where can I go?"

didn't return to the office after the dinner hour. Chaps are doing that everywhere at present."

"And perhaps the police will get on the track of the terrible scoundrel who killed poor Uncle Joshua. Are you sure that he is dead? It seems too awful."

"I'm not quite, but I'm almost certain," Tom interjected. "And, of course, it wouldn't do to let anyone know that we are his relations. I've never spoken about him to anyone here, and I'm sure he never spoke about us."

"I'll not say a word, Tom. Now go. I'm in a terrible dread for fear you may be caught."

He looked down at her, so frail and still, so full of thought, only of him. He fumbled in his pocket.

"I'll try to let you know where I am," he began. "And now—"

"You mustn't run any risks."

"And now, I'm going to give you all the money I have except ten shillings," he went on.

He dropped four sovereigns on the table.



Tom turned into the sitting-room, and with a cry he staggered back. For there on the hearthrug was his uncle, and a large cash-box lay on the table open and empty.

counterpane, Ethel was weeping. He took her in his strong arms and kissed her.

"Good-bye, and don't worry about it," he said. "After all, I'm innocent, and that's everything. Neither of us have anything to be ashamed about. And sooner or later the truth is certain to come out."

"She will," he said, and he sobbed.

"And look out for an advertisement from me in the papers," he went on. "I'll put one in when things have settled down a bit. I'll send it so that only you will know it's mine. Answer it, and tell me how you are getting on. And take care of yourself, and be brave. If I can feel certain that you are all right I'll be quite happy."

"She clung to him, and he gently released himself. Then, pointed to the heart at her sorrow, he turned swiftly and went down the stairs.

The third Chapter. Ralph Nickson turns up.

ments were packed with people eagerly discussing the latest war news as it came out every half hour in fresh editions of the papers.

Tom forced his way through the hordes of people, and at length turned into a side-street.

Here mounted police were trying to keep order amongst the hundreds of young fellows struggling to get into the recruiting offices. The doors were closed, guarded by recruiting sergeants, and only opened from time to time to allow a batch of volunteers to enter. He had to take his turn, but here at least he felt safe. He had only to stand with his hat well down over his eyes, and in that great crush no one could recognize him.

Hours passed, and, despite the long waiting, none of the general enthusiasm abated. Sallies of wit evoked cheers, singing burst forth continually—all was good-humour. Step by step he got closer to the door. It was well up in the evening before, in a great rush, he was carried into the hall.

Here the increment was speedily cut short. From the jostling of civilian high spirits the volunteers and corps suddenly within the scope of military discipline. Trained soldiers were at every turning; authoritative commands fell on his ears; he had to fall into line, to move when bidden, to go where directed.

Up a flight of stairs the volunteers filed and into a large room. Officers

you up somehow. Word has come that you are to march to Waterloo Station."

He pointed to the door. They trooped down the stairs to the hall. Other soldiers were there, and they were lined up into fours by much pulling and shoving into places. It was done roughly, but with the utmost good-humour.

"Now, Sergeant Farby, take 'em off!" an officer said.

The sergeant stepped forward. "Stick together in fours, and don't give way for anything," he explained. "Front rank, keep your eyes on me; other ranks, follow the men before you." March!

He strode off. They followed, corporals here and there on either side keeping them together. It was done roughly, but with the utmost constable turned his horse to lead them, and amidst cheering, they moved away. Out in Whitehall the cheering grew louder. Men and boys joined them, waving their hats. One of the new recruits, a professional musician, raised his voice in song, and it was taken up:

"Fall in and follow me!"

The same air that had brought such misery to Tom that morning, and now he joined in it! More had been crowded into the hours of that day than he had experienced in all his life before. Like a man in a dream, he tramped along. Nothing seemed real to him.

Officers were reading the paper attentively. A tall, thin, swartly-faced man good-looking but sinister, his mouth had grown harder since his imprisonment. He looked up, saw Tom, and gasped.

For a moment he stood pondering. Then he edged his way quickly towards the door. At that moment Corporal Mellows spoke up:

"Now, boys, come along!" he said. "Something ominous in the way the sergeant looks, he's tramped out of the room. I've turned the room had turned Tom's heart cold. Passing the bookstall he bought an evening paper, and he hurried into a special train. Tom opened the paper, saw a lurid heading, and his knees began to knock together."

Despite the excitement about the war, half a column had been given to the murder of Tom. It was one of the most cold-blooded crimes ever committed, the reporter stated. The murderer had nearly been caught, but had managed to escape.

The police, however, felt certain that it would not be long before he was apprehended. He could be identified with certainty. And then followed a description which Tom recognized as his own. His clothes turned even to the clothes he was wearing.

He was terribly shaken; he felt he was turning ghastly pale. His condition would soon be noticed by his comrades if he did not manage to pull himself together. And just then the recruit sitting opposite spoke with a ring of astonishment.

"Why, there's old Farby having a row with one of the station constables!" he said.

The sergeant had pulled the roll-call from his satchel. He was gasping furiously.

"I can't be bothered with the cock-and-bull stories you hear," he rapped out. "My duty is to take these men to headquarters, and they're coming with me—there's no two ways about that. That's all!"

"I'll get the gentleman as notified me—"

"Why didn't you bring him along at first?" Farby scoffed. "Nice sort of fellow. I'll look if some of our boys' there when we get to our journey's end!"

The men were formed up, and he went along the line. Name after name he called out. There was delay in answering in some cases. At last the recruit apparently was missing.

"Thomas Brooks!" he kept shouting.

Tom started guiltily.

"It was the name he had taken, and worn out by hunger and exhaustion, he had forgotten."

"Are you doing it any answer?" Farby stormed. "Fine promise as a soldier you're giving!"

"I'm sorry," Tom muttered, and Tom wisely held his tongue. Farby strode off, and shortly returned.

The sergeant looked at Tom from which our train goes," he said to a corporal. "We've twenty minutes to get away, or we could lose a bit of grub let 'em have it."

"Many of the recruits, Tom amongst them, availed themselves of the offer. The barracks were terribly pushed after a while into the crowded refreshment room. Here as everybody was so excited, all talking about the war."

Corporal Mellows horded his charge round the bar to a corner, where he could take a strategic position between them and the door. In military life nothing is left to chance. The barman was terribly busy; it was very difficult to get attended to. From all quarters of the barracks the recruits came.

Tom looked around. A man opposite was reading an evening paper. Tom looked at the paper. He saw a lurid heading, and his knees began to knock together.

"I'm sorry," Tom muttered. "I thought it was a gas."

The man opposite looked at him. "If it happens to meet Ethel now whilst I am away, he may coax her into forgiving him."

Nickson was reading the paper attentively. A tall, thin, swartly-faced man good-looking but sinister, his mouth had grown harder since his imprisonment. He looked up, saw Tom, and gasped.

For a moment he stood pondering. Then he edged his way quickly towards the door. At that moment Corporal Mellows spoke up:

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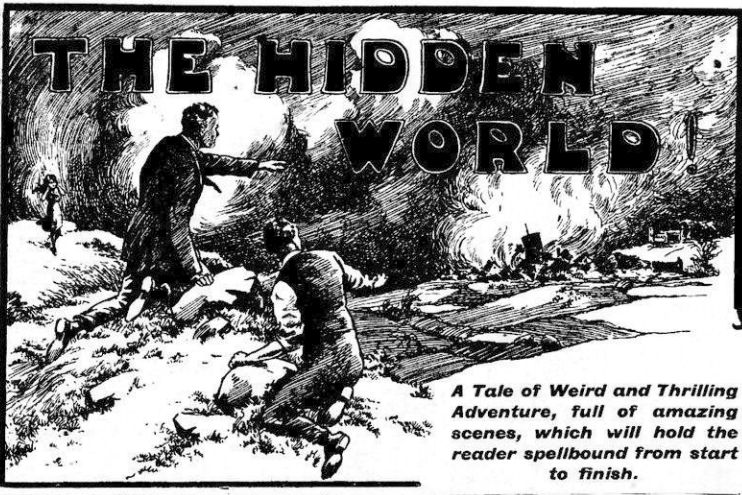
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"Look! The church tower! The houses!" gasped Dick, in awe-stricken tones, as the old square belfry and some half-dozen cottages seemed to melt into heaps of crumbling ruins.

The 1st Chapter. The Earthquake.

Thrusting the remnant of a sausage-roll from his mouth, Dick Manley rose languidly to his feet.

"Phew! Isn't a hot one, he gulped. "Oh, well, I think it was August, instead of the middle of March."

Nell Manley nodded without speaking and as Dick looked down at the pretty child's face—she was barely twelve, though constant coughing and her father's stern old brother made her seem older—and missed the over-pleasant smile from her lips, the mischievous laughter from her eyes, the sense of genuine evil which had oppressed him all the morning, returned with redoubled force.

He glanced quickly away lest his sister should read his thoughts—for there was something unaccountably like fear in his heart—and looked slowly around him.

Behind the little copse, in the shade of which they had stopped for their midday meal, stretched the unbroken moors, the vales, and gorges, with which it was scarred, rising invisible from where they stood.

Before them at the foot of a gentle slope, a well-tiled and prosperous valley, dotted with farmhouses, and having, at its further extremity, a typical Yorkshire village. In park-like grounds beyond the village, stood the stately pile of Manley Court, the home of Dick and Nell.

"Leave these boys a huge, red-rimmed sun, which many had noticed that day, though only one man in all Europe read the ominous sign aright, shone from a perfectly cloudless sky."

"Not a breath of wind fanned their cheeks, not a bird cleared the air, but from moor and valley came a constant, dismal chorus, the plaintive lowing of cattle, the uneasy neighing of horses, and the whining of dogs. From some gully close at hand, a vixen fox lifted up her voice in a melancholy howl, which drew Nellie to her feet with a cry of alarm."

"Oh, Dick, let us go home. I am frightened!" she pleaded, clinging to her brother's arm and waving her hand.

"Don't be a silly, Nell!" said Dick laughingly. "Surely a rook-bird creak like you ought to know a vixen's fox by his time."

"It isn't that, Dick; but all Nature seems uneasy and anxious. See, the very plovers are cranking on the ground as though they had seen a hawk. It almost seems as though every tree, shrub, and vine thing were expecting some awful calamity. I wonder if there is anything in what Professor Kendrick Klux said at breakfast this morning about an earthquake."

"Dick! About the red tint in the sun being the sign of an earthquake,"

he said scornfully. "We don't have earthquakes in England. I told him so, and—"

"He told you that when he wanted information on marbles, or how to spin a top, he would be pleased to consult you; but the children shrank not venture an opinion on things they did not understand," interrupted Nell, with a mischievous laugh which brought the red blood surging into her brother's face.

"Professor Kendrick Klux is a hump-backed fellow with the heart of a bear, the voice of a bull-frog, and the manners of a pig, and—"

Again he was interrupted. "This time in a much more drastic fashion, for a lad of about his own age, with an ugly but open and kindly face, burst through the undergrowth through the trees and caught him a sounding box on the ears, which sent him rolling on the ground, whilst Nell, with a shriek of terror, flung panic-stricken on to the moor, unable to control her fears sufficiently to come to a standstill, before she had covered a couple of hundred yards."

Almost as soon as he touched the ground, Dick Manley was on his feet again, gazing in mingled indignation and surprise at a stout-built, stocky, red young fellow who was already throwing off his coat in a most businesslike manner.

"What on earth did you do that for? Who are you, anyway?" blurted out the assaulted one.

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intermingled with the second of hand slugging on both sides, neither obtaining the slightest advantage.

"Jumping Jupiter!" I'm getting grayer!" he muttered.

But when he looked at his opponent was staggering about like a drunken man.

With a sickening sense of horror, he realized that the earth was swaying slowly from side to side like a monster accused from sleep; then came a sudden jerk, which threw him off his feet, and he found that the ground roared and trembled, as though the solid earth had been turned into a huge jelly.

Their minds forgotten, the two lads clung to each other, and raised themselves to their knees.

Dick thrust forth a terrible trembling hand in the direction of the village.

"Look! The church tower! The houses," he gasped, in awe-stricken tones, as the old square belfry, and some half dozen cottages seemed to melt into heaps of crumbling ruins.

"Thank Heaven the Court is still standing, and my father is safe!" muttered Dick gratefully.

"My sister! She will be frightened out of her senses!" gasped Dick, springing to his feet, and calling his companion with him.

"Courage, Nell! It is all over now. I'm coming," he shouted, as he saw the child standing, evidently paralysed with terror, on the open moor.

But even as the two lads commenced to run towards the lonely girl, a fierce shock than any they had hitherto experienced, sent the earth rocking, and they rolled some more on the ground, whilst a noise such as neither had ever heard before, roared in their ears.

No words were his justice to that awful sound. The combined waves of the world, firing in unison, would have never done what this awful volume of sound.

Shaken, dazed, but firm in the determination to reach a safe corner, Dick and Nell's sister, Dick struggled to his feet, and commenced running in the direction in which he had last seen her, followed, though he was too confused to realise it at the time, by Jim Klux.

Suddenly he came to an abrupt halt on the edge of a yawning crevice, from which a few minutes before had been level moorland.

For some seconds he faced backwards and forwards, perilously near the edge of the precipitous cliff, then, realising his danger, hung himself, with his back pressed against the rocky wall, his feet against the other.

Twice his narrow path contracted to such an extent that he was obliged to continue into a crevice hanging on to the face of the cliff like a fly on a wall, but fortunately at a time there remained sufficient of the crack to give him hand and foothold.

The strain on both brain and muscle was terrible, but Dick scarcely felt it, so severely was bringing him nearer his sister.

He was not very clear in his mind what he would do when he did reach Nell's side, for at once a faint vision of the crevice bordered with a helpless girl would be the height of madness to risk any attempt to drop more than his own weight on to the feet of the other.

A hundred feet from the bottom of the chasm the crevice came to an abrupt termination on a ledge of rock which, for a few feet, lay from left to right.

Exhausted and disheartened, Dick sank on to the hard, smooth surface to rest his head, and as he recently he rose to his feet, and, approaching the extreme edge of the ledge, looked anxiously towards Nell.

"Cheer-ho, Nell! Come down in the world, haven't you?" he cried, with a cheerfulness he was far from feeling.

The girl started, as one aroused from sleep; then, with a shrill scream, leaped to the edge of the ledge, and stood swaying backwards for nearly a minute before she ventured to look up.

Then she started running to the foot of the cliff with outstretched arms, crying:

"Oh, Dick! I am so glad you have come!" Take me away from this awful place."

Time had ceased to exist for Dick Manley.

An eternity seemed already to have elapsed since his fight with Jim Klux.

But with every minute that passed his brain grew colder, and his ears found himself wondering why Nell did not move, for she was standing in the position he had so often seen her assume straight down by the water's edge straight at the sheer wall of rock from the summit of which her brother was watching him.

Again and again he shouted, although conscious that the loudest shout would reach her, and then stretched up a broken twig, waving his handkerchief to it, waved it frantically.

But though, perchance, this might have been visible had she looked up, Nell did not move, but remained standing in the same strained, wooden position.

Afterwards he remembered being struck with the likeness of the face of the receptive operator, a geological strata in his class-room at school; but at the time his brain scarcely grasped the point.

A few feet to his left, an enormous crack in the face of the cliff, which so far as he could see extended to the bottom of the chasm.

At any other time Dick Manley might have hesitated to have stooped to pick up a path, but his whole being

was filled with longing to hasten to his sister's side.

Once he was safe, he looked toward the village, now almost levelled to the ground, and, seeing no signs of life, he was about to descend when he saw that the crevice would overwhelm him before his

thoughts could find time to commended, for the loose soil around the jaws of the opening gave beneath his weight, and he found himself slipping over the edge, and was thrown violently down the jagged shaft.

The brother and sister shouted with all their might; and a waving of

hands showed that they had been securely afterwards a parachute made out of a newspaper, and weighted with a stone, floated down to them.

Jim managed to seize it as it floated past him, and found a note attached.

It was in Professor Klux's big, sprawling writing, and ran as follows:

"Keep cool. I am coming as soon as my machine is ready."

"KENDRICK KLUX."

Beneath it, in smaller though more lively characters, was written:

"Back up, old chap! I'm coming directly the gaz turns his back. Will do the Santa Claus trick, same as you."

"J. K."

The Third Chapter.

Though a plucker had than Dick Manley did not get any less interestedly glad when Jim Klux joined him on the ledge; for night was coming, and the shadows were already beginning to deepen.

Suddenly Dick started, then pointed to the furthest end of the depression.

"What's that huge, black thing coming towards us?"

"Jim Klux laughed."

"Merely the shadow of a cloud passing over the sun—," he began;

then paused, for there was not a cloud in the sky above nor did any shadow have been cast by the setting sun in that deep hollow.

Some instinct warned Dick that a fresh danger was upon him. "Well," he cried, "I want you to do exactly as I tell you. Don't look behind you, whatever you do; but run as quickly as you can to yonder heap of rocks, and crawl into the smallest hole you can squeeze into."

Impressed more by Dick's manner than his words, Nell ran to where a number of huge rocks had been piled by the force of the earthquake against the foot of the precipice; and her brother breathed a sigh of relief when he saw her completely disappear from view beneath a huge alabaster column.

"What on earth is it, Jim?" he asked, in hushed, awed tones.

As though it had heard the question, the apparition stopped, and the two boys uttered cries of dismay when they saw it rise on its hind legs, and catch a brief glimpse of the most fearful three-headed beast they had ever imagined in their lives.

For nearly a minute it remained, staring its hideous head from side to side, and sniffing the air, as though to catch an evasive scent.

Suddenly a deep, booming roar issued from its huge, bulging, drooping back on to four legs, it came galloping with huge, kangaroo-like leaps towards them.

The astonished lack gasped with horror.

It was an enormous beast or reptile, well over eighty feet in length, and nearly thirty feet in height, laden with a mountain of the topmost tooth of a sawlike ridge which ran from the front of its hideous head to the root of a tail bigger round than a horse's body at its thickest end.

Moving at a pace which would hardly have originated with a normal horse, it scathed the foot of the precipice immediately beneath the ledge ere either Dick or Jim had quite persuaded himself that he was not part of some fearful dream.

Mounting halfway up the slope on which Nell had been standing shortly before she raised its huge, bulging, resting its enormous forehead against the precipice, craned forward until its red, galling mouth and foot-high teeth were on a level with the ledge. Then an enormous, purple tongue shot out, and Dick would have been swept off the ledge had he not seized, seizing him round the waist, drawn him into the crevice made which efforts had descended.

The monster made frantic efforts to reach its prey, its hot, foetid breath turning them sick with nausea, until at length it gave up the attempt and sank back on to all fours, raising the white, terrified rocks with angry bellows of disappointed rage.

Suddenly its roaring ceased, and Dick felt his heart almost stop beating, as he saw it turn towards the rocks beneath which Nell Manley crouched.

The beast which was almost a shout of relief escaped him, as he felt the man being heartlessly trodden past the rocks, then paused to sniff the air, ere it darted off to the right.

Suddenly its fierce rush was checked, its huge head disappeared into a hollow, and when it emerged it was holding the dead horse of which Nell had spoken in its huge jaws.

With no more difficulty than a cat finds in carrying a rat, the monster sped off at the same strange, loping gallop it had come, and was soon swallowed up in the gathering darkness.

Dick Manley and Jim Klux looked at each other for some minutes without speaking.

"It's incredible! Impossible!" ejaculated the former at last. "A dinosaur the largest and fiercest flesh-eating animal that ever existed, that is supposed to have been extinct a million years—alive and in England in the twentieth century! We both saw it, so it cannot be an illusion—"

"Good heavens, I must get back to the surface!" cried Jim Klux. "If my father comes down here to-morrow he will be killed by that brute to a certainty."

"But you forget there is no return up the crevice. How can you climb up the place we were obliged to drop down?" objected Dick.

Jim Klux uttered an ejaculation of surprise.

"But I must, or stop here and see—"

he could just discern his sister crouched at the foot of the precipice. "It's all right, Nell," he shouted contentedly. "I only went to help Jim Klux up the crevice. He will be back before morning with a rope, then I will soon have you out of this. Go back to your rocks and sleep until I call you. You will be much safer there."

"Oh, no, Dick, that does seem such a way away from you there. Let me stop here. I will be as quiet as a mouse," pleaded the child.

"Oh, all right, but be ready to do a bolt if I give the alarm!" agreed Dick, thinking that if the monster returned he must hear it in time to send Nell running to the safety of the rocks.

Dick intended to keep awake all night, but he had had a long, exciting day, and lulled into a sense of false security by the silence which obtained on every side, he was soon seated on the ledge with his back against its rocky wall fast asleep.

How long Dick Manley slept he could never tell. When he again awoke it was to find the moon striving to break through a mass of fleecy clouds which dimmed her light.

Annoyed at finding he had slept—

bank of clouds, flooding the whole scene in silvery light.

A cry of incredulous dismay burst from his lips.

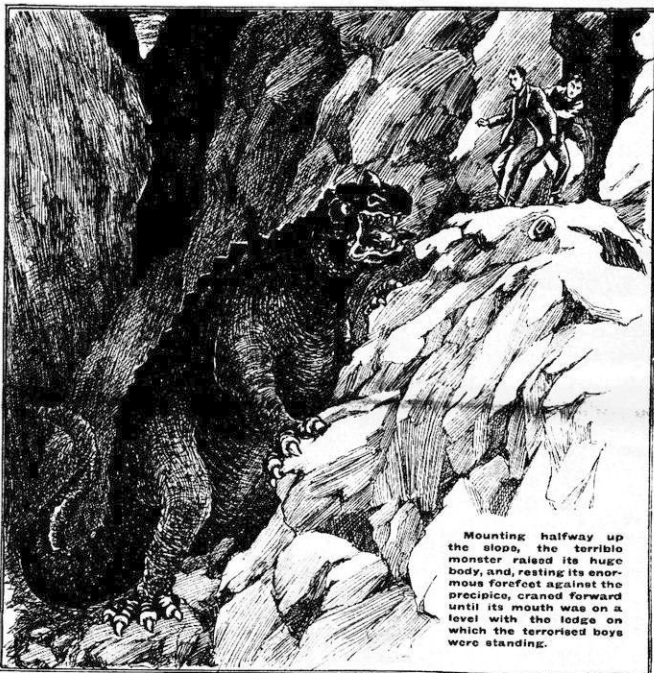
The sunken moon was dotted with broad-headed, long-armed, short-legged savages; their hideous heads were covered with matted red hair, and they had prominent animal-like jawbones, large, staring eyes, flat broad nostrils, and huge, thick-lipped mouths, on either side of which protruded enormous canine teeth.

The newcomers were armed with stone-tipped spears, and each carried in his girdle a flat axe fastened with wittles to a wooden handle.

All this Dick Manley took in at a single glance, then his attention was attracted to an excited group almost beneath him.

His heart for the moment ceased beating when he saw Nell struggling in the midst of a group of savage warriors, one of whom was flourishing a stone axe threateningly above her head.

But ere the blow could descend a woman with long, flowing hair darted forward, snatched the child from the warrior's grasp, and, avoiding the hands stretched out to seize her, fled



Mounting halfway up the slope, the terrible monster raised its huge body, and, resting its enormous forehead against the precipice, craned forward until its mouth was on a level with the ledge on which the terrorised boys were standing.

my father devoured before my eyes!" he declared, adding more hopefully:

"You must come with me. I can climb on your shoulder, and limit you up afterwards."

Dick Manley shook his head. "It will help you up, then return, for I cannot leave my sister to pass the night in this awful place alone," he declared.

Jim Klux seized the other's hand and pressed it gratefully. "Forgive me, Dick; thinking only of my own trouble, I forgot yours. Come and help me as far as you can. The sooner I am off the sooner we will get Nell to a place of safety," he said, returning to the crevice followed by Dick.

The 4th Chapter.

A Night of Terror.

It was quite dark when Dick Manley returned to the ledge from which he had witnessed the coming of the dinosaur. He was met by a loud, agonised cry.

"Dick, what's that? Where have you got? Why have you left me here all alone?"

Peering over the side of the ledge,

he crept to the side of the ledge, and, looking over, was relieved to see beneath him his sister sleeping peacefully.

Rising to his feet he yawned and stretched himself, then stood for some seconds, arms still raised above his head, for a subdued murmur of voices penetrated to his ears.

"Hallo!" he shouted. "Who's there?"

Immediately the voices were hushed. Approaching the extreme edge of the rocky platform Dick looked long and anxiously into the darkness beneath. Was it funny, or did he really see eyes like tiny sparks of light shining from the ground below?

Suddenly all doubts were set at rest by harsh, guttural voices, shouting with a evidently an order in an unknown tongue.

It was followed by a piercing shriek and a frantic cry of—

"Help, Dick, help!"

Almost beside himself with anxiety for his sister, Dick Manley leapt on the rocky platform and peered into the darkness beneath him.

At that moment, as though to accentuate the helplessness of his position, the moon burst from behind a

with astounding softness in the direction the dinosaur had taken.

"Stop, you beasts; bring her back!"

"I'll," Dick began, then ceased speaking as the fullness of his throats, his absolute powerlessness to aid his sister, burst with crushing force upon him.

Suddenly one of the savages snatched a wedge-shaped missile from his girdle, and, waving it above around his head, sent it hurtling towards the exposed figure on the ledge.

Dick saw the missile coming and stepped back, but though the movement saved his head from being split open, the flying stone skinned his temple and he sank half-conscious on the rock.

Instinctively he raised himself on his elbow.

As he did so he was conscious of a distant cry of warning, followed by a continuous succession of leaden thuds, as though someone was beating an enormous drum.

A few seconds later loud cries of terror and dismay came from the foot of the precipice. Looking down he saw the savages fleeing in all directions, whilst a huge beast, with a parrot-like beak which, though

smaller than the dinosaur, was much more terrible in appearance, hurled itself like some grotesquely horrible projectile into their midst.

Trampling fearfully the monster darted hither and thither, slashing at the savages with his fearful horny upper lip, and trampling underfoot yet being unable to make their escape.

For nearly a minute the boys watched the fearful creature thrash savages, the mount man, swim before his eyes, and all was blank.

When Dick Manley recovered consciousness it was to find his head on Jim Klux's knee, who was pouring something which choked and burned, yet seemed to be putting fresh life into his veins, down his throat.

"They have captured her!" he gasped at last.

"Who? Not the beasts?" demanded Jim in dismay.

"No, idiot, the cave-men!" he boomed a deep voice, and, turning, Dick saw the huge, ungainly form of Kendrick Klux behind him.

He looked at the man, trembling with excitement, and handling with almost loving care the wedge-shaped stone which had struck him down.

"It's a cell or, perhaps stone, similar to the one found a few years ago in a cave in France with the oldest known human bones," he said, speaking in the deep, harsh tones which fitted so well with his stout, thick-set form.

"It's a cell or, perhaps stone, similar to the one found a few years ago in a cave in France with the oldest known human bones," he said, speaking in the deep, harsh tones which fitted so well with his stout, thick-set form.

"He then went on to describe Dick's assailant with a facility which drew exclamations of amazement from the astonished boy.

"You have ever seen them?" he asked.

"Not yet, but hope to soon," growled Kendrick Klux. "So they've got your sister, have they? I'm hopped. Don't worry; they won't hurt her. Most likely turn her into a goddess, or something of that sort. Now, tell me about the dinosaur."

Professor Klux was one to inspire confidence, and, hoping against hope that a man who was being against him the foremost scientist of the age could save his sister from the fearful fate which threatened her, Dick related the adventures which had befallen him that night.

Professor Klux listened without comment until Dick mentioned the beast with the parrot-like beak.

"Single horn growing between the eyes, some like a ruff round the neck, twice as big as a rhinoceros, horny scales covering the body. Short, thick tail!" he asked.

"Dick started at his description.

"You must have seen it!" he ejaculated.

By only as a nod of an artist drew it by his description," explained the professor.

"But you must have seen the beast," he insisted, as he persisted Dick.

"Professor Klux shook his head.

"I found less than a score bones beneath a glacier in the Arctic Regions, and reconstructed the animal from them. I wasn't far out," he asked.

Dick had, of course, seen many pictures of prehistoric beasts reconstructed by scientists from a few bones, but had no idea they could possibly prove so accurate.

He was about to say as much, when the thought of Nell's peril returned to his mind, and he repeated:

"Resting on Jim's shoulder, he drew himself to his feet, crying:

"What a beast! I am to remain captive, my sister in the hands of the savages are carrying Nell farther from me. I see you have brought a rock-stone, but are both armed. Let us start at once."

Professor Klux laid his hand almost gently on Dick's arm. "It would do your sister no good if we were killed before we could reach her. If, as I suspect, the monster is no more than an opening into an unknown world, and its inhabitants will not care to see us in their light, so we must wait until the beast has its own share full into the sunken hole."

Dick looked at the speaker in blank dismay.

"An under-world?" he repeated.

"That's what I said," snarled Professor Klux, adding more kindly as he marked the misery of the boy's face. "Don't despair. I'll back my brains and your British pluck to bring her out, but you must be prepared to follow her into the centre of the earth itself."

(Another thrilling instalment of this grand story will be published with these notes, but appear in next Monday's issue.)

A FIGHTING CHANCE

A Wonderful, Long Complete Story Introducing
TOM BELCHER
 Light-weight Boxer.
 By **ARTHUR S. HARDY.**



The 1st Chapter.

A Sporting Tip.

"Hi, Jim!"
 The words came echoing across the road, and arrested the progress of a freshly-dressed youth of about twenty years of age, who was swaggering along a street in the City, with a cigarette set between his lips, and a cane swinging in his right hand.
 James Dewar, junior, son of James Dewar, solicitor, of Welbrook Mansions, E.C.4., was no end of a "nut." He was a regular visitor to the West End Music Halls, a rare "lad" amongst the boys, and a persistent gambler.
 Backing horses amounted almost to a passion with him. And since his father only made him a small allowance, for which he expected a full return in the shape of clerical work at the office, Jim was always in debt. He borrowed from his friends, he ran up accounts with the bookmakers, trusting to a lucky coup to set him right. He owed bills at his tailor's and bootmaker's, and generally managed to give his father about one hundred per cent more worry than the business itself.

James Dewar, senior, was an able and clever man, and it was because he recognized his father's ability, perhaps, that the son let things slide. His father had brains and ability enough for both of them, he thought, perhaps.
 Anyhow, here he was, already half an hour late for the office, with a cigarette in his mouth, and his hat set at an acute angle upon his head.
 Jim Dewar wore spats, his gloves were spotless. The handkerchief which he thrust into the cuff of his shirt, was of silk.
 His cane was a gold-mounted one. His tie was made of a brilliant fawn.
 His suit was just "it," and his striped socks made Jim's acquaintances sigh with envy.
 At the moment when he heard his name called, Jim Dewar was seeking hard for some excuse to delay his entry to the office. And now he got it.

"Hallo, Bert!" he cried, as he swung round and recognised a chum, one Bert Thomas. "How are you?"
 "Fine, Jim!" said the other, as they shook hands cordially. "Haven't got a minute, though. My gov'nor's in a way this morning, and I mustn't be out very long. Just thought I'd ask you whether you had a tip for the big race at the Stancheater Handicap, you know?"
 Young Dewar's face fell.
 "Tell you the truth, he drawed. I haven't got a one in my head. The more I study the race the more confused I get. I had half a quid on three Run three weeks ago, but it was scratched yesterday, and it's left me floored."
 "Well, I can put you on to a good thing," said the other, quickly.
 "Look here, I met Standish yesterday. His dad is well with racing men, you know. And he told me that his father heard from Wellington—he's the trainer of all Lord Deverham's horses, and Captain Chidley's, too—a dices for a number of small owners as well—that Bell Rope was going to run today, and meant business."
 "All the reports as to its having gone lame are untrue. It was just

done to get a good price, you know. I used that, Wellington told me, and I'd back it for all he was worth, and he's put his shirt on it. I can't lose. If you feel like sporting a bet, old Green ought to give you ten to one. So if you want a soft sup, there you are, my boy."
 The words were spoken with such an air of assurance and conviction that Jim Dewar's face beamed.
 "Thanks, but I'm said gratefully. That's the sort of tip I like. Your father had it straight from the trainer, eh?"
 "Yes, it's a very open race, you see, and the public are all abroad. But Bell Rope can't lose. It's from a hot stable, remember, and Johnny Griff is riding. It's a cert, Jim."
 "I'll go and see Green at once," said Jim Dewar.
 He had used the excuse he had been looking for. He'd a justifiable reason for neglecting his father's business now, he reckoned.
 Round to a neighbouring wine-shop he went, and, as he anticipated, he found several boon companions there. To them he imparted the momentous secret of the Wellington training stable, and declared that Bell Rope was going to win.

The next sought out Green, the tobacconist. He found that wily individual, who managed to make a good deal out of bookmaking, in spite of the law, busy serving a customer. Jim, a cigarette and waited.
 Then at the first chance that presented itself he said:
 "Oh, Green, what odds are you laying against Bell Rope for the Stancheater Handicap this afternoon?"
 Green looked hard at him.
 "Ten to one, if you want to make a bet, Mr. Dewar," he said, but his manner was far from cordial.
 "All right," said Jim Dewar easily. "Lay me twenty-five pounds to two pounds ten. The odds ought to be a bit more generous, I reckon, but I'll take 'em."
 He was about to leave the shop upon the entrance of another customer, when Green said to him, "Dewar, I want to have a word with you."
 The nut waited, fidgeting uneasily, as he caught himself wondering what the bookmaker would want with him.

"The moment the shop was clear again, Green spoke, and in no unmeasured terms.
 "Look here, Mr. Dewar," he said, "when you came in I thought you were going to settle the debt you already owe me."
 "Oh, it's nothing," Jim Dewar retorted, in a tone of indifference. "Let that stand over, Green. If I win today, deduct it from what you'll have to give me, and there you are."
 "Nothing's certain in horseracing," answered the tobacconist. "You've swayed me money ever since we started, paying me in drinks and cigars, and if I hadn't paid myself out of your winnings at different times, I should have been let out of pocket. Now you owe me seven pounds fifteen shillings. If you like to pay me the money, I'll accept to-day's bet. If not, it's off."
 "Oh, come, you don't mean to say you'd refuse me?" said Jim Dewar, adopting an air of injured innocence.
 "I not only would, but I'd take

jolly good care I got the cash, too. I've heard a few tales about you lately, Mr. Dewar, which surprised me. You owe money all round. Now, I can't afford to make any man a present of seven pounds fifteen shillings. And it comes to this: I mean to have my money, and if I don't get it by lunch-time, or the better part of it by then, I shall go to your gov'nor and tell him how matters stand."

"You wouldn't dare!" gasped the half-broasted nut, taken clean aback by the threat. "You know your sort of betting is illegal, and he's a solicitor. He'd have you badly punished for it."
 Green laughed.
 "Oh, I'm not afraid," he said. "I'll risk that. Now, you get the money, and pay me, say, a fiveer, and we'll go on. Otherwise your dad and I will have a heart to heart talk."

Jim Dewar pleaded, argued, expostulated, but all to no purpose, and in the end of things young Dewar walked to the office in a resentful frame of mind, feeling certain that Green would do as he threatened, and thoroughly annoyed at the possibility of missing the dead cert for the Stancheater Handicap.
 He scarcely knew what to do. Then it occurred to him to try and borrow the cash. He applied to his friend Bert Thomas for the loan of a fiveer, but that youth pleading poverty, and the end of the month, got out of it. He then called on one or two other bright sparks of his acquaintances,

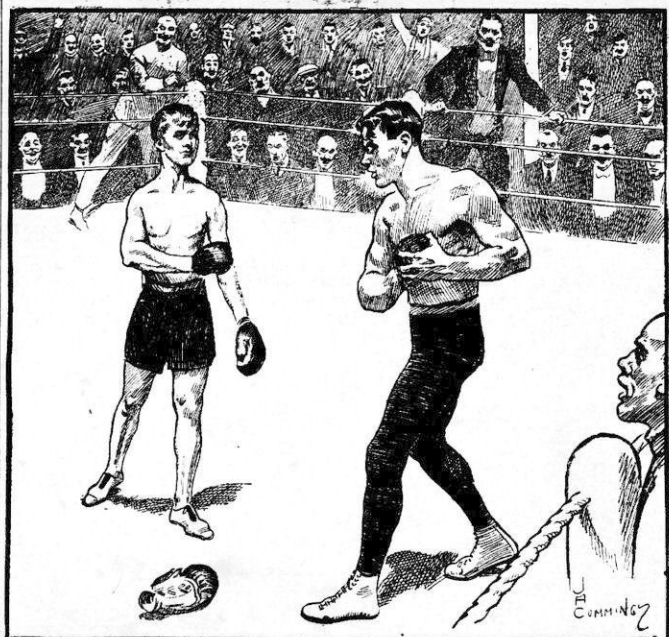
who curled up at the mere mention of a loan.
 He had nothing of sufficient value on his person wherewith to raise money on, and at last gave it up in despair.
 At a quarter to twelve he entered his father's office, kicking open the door, and swaggering in with all the nonchalance in the world.

The 2nd Chapter.

Temptation.

Inwardly he was wondering what the parental reception would be.
 There was a head clerk named Hughes, too, who could be acid and vinegar when he liked.
 To Jim Dewar's relief, when he glanced around the outer office, there was only a boy at work there, a misfit of a lad, with an eager and alert face. This boy was busying over his task of copying a legal document, and plying his pen with a conscientiousness and correctness which was rather remarkable, for it may be said here that he could copy or draft out a document with wonderful skill for one so young.
 Jim Dewar gave the boy one glance, shot a look at the door of his father's private office, and which was closed, and then with a sigh of relief, hung up his hat on a peg, and put his cane away.
 "Morning, Tom," he said.
 "Good-morning, sir," answered

the boy, and, having broken the ice, the ne'er-to-well strolled nonchalantly forward.
 "Is my father in, Belcher?" he asked.
 "No, sir; he's out," answered Tom Belcher. "Everybody's out barring me. The gov'nor's gone over to the Law Courts on that Sumner-Nixon case. He won't be back until after lunch; but he said would you attend to the Beneficial Estate Mortgages, when you came?"
 "Oh, all right!" answered Jim Dewar. "Any letters for me?"
 "No, sir."
 The worthless scamp shot a swift glance at his father's door.
 "So he and the boy were alone in the office, eh? Instantly an evil thought flashed across his mind. By George, why not? He went to the door of the private room, opened it, and passed within.
 "I've put the mortgage papers on your table, sir," called the boy after him.
 "Oh, never mind!" the nut shouted back. "I'll attend to them presently."
 "They're urgent, sir," Tom Belcher reminded him. "And there's a lot to be done to them. The work was left over from yesterday, you know."
 "Oh, mind your own business!" snarled the youth, and Tom said no more.
 The scoundrel stood with his back to the empty hearth, his hands thrust into his pockets.



"I've had enough of this," shouted Georgie Martin, flinging his gloves to the floor of the ring. "He doesn't fight fair, and the referee's no good. Somebody else had better have a go!"

A FIGHTING CHANCE!

(Continued from previous page.)

He gave him half a stale loaf and a cake. Tom blessed him, went away, ate them, and felt better. But by night-fall his situation was more desperate than that night. His courage began to fail him as he dragged his feet wearily along. He hadn't got a dog's chance out of it. He muttered, with a gasp, to look up, he found himself outside a boxing hall, whose walls and floor were covered with bills and posters announcing a grand boxing tournament which was to take place that night. The highly-coloured and exaggerated posters which depicted boxers in action were sufficiently striking to use his fists, and had won a championship round had been won by father died, studied the bills with interest. He saw that the chief item on the programme was a fifteen-rounds contest - two minute rounds-between George Martin and Jewey Mears, who were stated to be fly-weights, for 125 and a purse. The president, George Martin was evidently the son of the proprietor and promoter of the hall-George Martin was pronounced to be "the legitimate claimant of the fly-weight," whatever that might have meant. Tom Belcher's eyes glared.

They were two lads of much his own weight, boxing for the stakes of £25 each. Here was a fight that there was money in the boxing game. And Tom Belcher, seized by an inspiration determined to present himself at the hall that night, and ask for a job in the ring. He might not get it, but, on the other hand, he might, after a few hard blows, catch a jolly good hiding not come with a boy who is on the verge of starvation. Tom Belcher suddenly felt light of heart. His despair vanished.

"Yes, sir," he muttered. "And I don't care who they set me to fight. I'll make him, wherever he is!" Which, it must be owned, was a very excellent sentiment for a boy who intended to adopt the profession of a boxer.

Tom, with an all-gone feeling within him, hung about the hall until its doors were opened, counting the dragging minutes away to make them vanish the sooner.

He saw the noisy crowd collect, listened to their talk, and discovered that the two fly-weights were considered to be the patrons of the St. George's Hall.

Presently the electric lights outside the main entrance of the building were illuminated. Livery attendants appeared within the entrance, and the doors were opened. Then a crowd fanned and pushed and shoved in their eagerness to gain admittance. Tom heard the money ring by the judges, the pay-boxes, and a thrill ran through him. Where so much money was taken, good money must be paid, he told himself, and he felt the lucky boxers going home after the evening's work was done with gold clinking in their pockets.

Yet when he made his way round to the back door, whether he was sent by the manager for the purpose and stated his business, he found himself forming one of a group of some fifty or twenty shabby-dressed and shabby-looking young men whose mission was similar to his own.

Three times did some of them try to shove their way through the door, and each time the doorkeeper-an old boxer evidently-thrust them back, and said, on an oath, closed the door upon them. Some of them, disgust, munched away, muttering as they went.

Tom remained. After some time he timidly knocked at the door, and kept on knocking until the sour-visaged old pug opened it and glared at him. "Water want?" growled the man. "I want to box," said Tom eagerly. "Is there any chance of a fight for me to-night?" The man looked Tom Belcher over, noticed what a little chap he was, scanned his pale, anxious face, and burst into a roar of laughter. "What!" he exclaimed. "You fight! What would your mother say? Go home and ask her to put yer arse over for kase and slap yer!" And bang went the door in Tom's face. Tom's heart sank into its boots. His enthusiasm vanished, and he became suddenly faint and cold. Another hope had vanished. It seemed that he was to be met with disappointment and ill-luck at every turn. Until then his hope had kept him up, but now the strain began to tell upon him. He had never been used to sleeping out, and last night's experience had left it tired. Yet he did not turn away, probably because he became too tired to move.

"Tom Belcher, sir." "Hi! That's a fighting name, anyway. Here, come along inside." Tom stopped, however, and the man in evening-dress, grabbing him by the shoulder, almost pulled him into the hall. "Arf yer luck, kid!" growled the broad-shouldered man, as Tom vanished. Tom was hurried along a dirty and brightly lit passage and pushed into a dimly illuminated room. It was a dressing-room. Several boxers occupied it, and they were either busy dressing or undressing. The man in evening-dress took down Tom's coat. "What's your weight?" he asked. "About seven stone, sir." "Hi! My lad, did you say pretty bad. Are you fit to fight?" "I've hardly had anything to eat for two days, sir," said Tom eagerly, his cheeks flushing; "and I slept out last night." "Well, hungry moon fight, lad," said the man in evening-dress. "Now look here, my boys. Do you understand anything about the game?" "I can look a lad, sir." "Then you'll do. Fact is, Jewey Mears has backed out and left my

end of a row if the audience had been disappointed over the big fight." "Yes, it is lucky." "Is the kid any good, sir?" "No. He's a raw novice. Weighs seven stone. I don't suppose he'll last a round. Name's Tom Belcher. But it doesn't matter a rap as long as I'm able to stage the contest; and I shall get out cheap." So saying, he walked hurriedly away, adding over his shoulder as he went: "You go and look after the kid, will you, Ben?" "Right you are, sir!" answered Ben; and a minute later he entered the dressing-room in which Tom Belcher was already preparing for the boxing match-which he hoped would open up a new career for him.

"Yes," answered Tom. "I've done a bit, I like it." "You're going against a tough 'un to-night, boy. You'll have to be firm." "I'm not afraid," was the firm reply. "He's bigger and stronger than you, and has done a lot of work in the professional ring." As he spoke the old veteran studied Tom's face, expecting the novice to exhibit signs of fear. "Not a bit of it. Tom's eyes still sparkled with eagerness, and he remarked, as if he were a matter of course, that he usually gave weight away. "I'm so small," he said. "Well, you've got pluck, at any rate, kid!" said Ben heartily, for he liked a bare lad. "And if old Ben can help you, you bet he will. Now, kid, have you got a pair of shoes?" "Yes," answered Tom. "And blowed if I know where you're going to get a pair to fit!" remarked the old veteran. "Especially if you run from under a seat!" "Try these." Tom did, and found them much too large for a boy of his size, the only ones possible, and he had to put up with them. Ben Adams was still talking to Tom and giving him words of advice when the whip striking the floor of the dressing-room open and stuck his head in. "Now then, Ben," he cried, "is your kid ready?" "I'm so," answered Ben. "Well, George is already in the ring, and waiting." He'd better hurry, then." Tom drew a deep breath, and then, with heart-beating wildly, and coveting as if a species of stage-fright, he followed at Adams' heels, until, passing through a door which gave admission to the hall, he saw the packed auditorium before him.

It was, to Tom Belcher, an extraordinary scene. All around and about him stood or stood a crowd of spectators. They stretched the full extent of the hall. The ring, brilliantly illuminated by special lights for the big contest, stood out a vivid square of white which almost blinded the eyes. Beyond were the faces of the Bohemians, the crowd amid the smoke-laden atmosphere. Seated on his chair in a corner of the ring was George Martin, the boy Tom was going to fight. Tom looked at him, and then set his teeth, for young Martin looked a formidable opponent in his body being singularly muscular for a boxer of his weight.

A man in evening-dress, evidently the M.C., was making an announcement, which was being received with a mixed favour. Tom walked towards the ring like a lad in a dream. When he got there they stopped, not knowing what next to do. "Go on-get into the ring!" cried Adams. "Hurry up, my lad!" Tom failed to hear the words, and then set his teeth, for young Martin looked a formidable opponent in his body being singularly muscular for a boxer of his weight.

The benches seemed small every-where, the vast almost fragrant. Tom's legs were thin, but in proportion, perhaps. His skin was white and shining as a girl's. "Hi! He's knocked out by the first whizz of George Martin's glove," thought Ben Adams, "and it's a shame." Outwardly he smiled cheerfully as he saw a question in Tom's eyes. "Do you know anything about boxing, my lad?" he asked.

"I don't know anything about boxing, my lad?" he asked.

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"I don't know anything about boxing, my lad?" he asked.

(Continued on the next page.)



Jim Dewar had just taken a sum of money from his father's cashbox when he, through the glass partition, and saw Tom Belcher, the office-boy, looking at him through the upper panes of the glass partition.

but leant against the wall of the hall, while the roar of shouting within the hall echoed in his ears. One by one the other disappointed applicants went away, and soon only Tom and a big, broad-shouldered man remained.

The night was drawing on, and the entertainment within the building was about half way over.

Suddenly open swung the door, and the keeper of it thrust his ugly head into the night.

"Here!" he cried. "Where's that kid?" "What kid?" asked the broad-shouldered man.

"Why, that lanky who wanted a 'smack'?" "Eric's he," said the other, pointing at Tom.

Tom roused himself, and looked out of his sleepy eyes at the doorkeeper.

The latter turned and said something to a man who stood within the hall. A moment later a man in evening-dress appeared, and scattering Tom from head to foot, said:

"Well, he's not enough, anyhow, but he looks lit." They then added: "Hi, my lad, did you say you wanted to box here to-night?" "Yes," answered Tom Belcher eagerly.

"What's your name?"

Tom George stranded. You're going to get fifteen rounds with him-see! I'm George Martin, proprietor and promoter of this 'ere hall, and if you put up a decent show I'll give you a couple of quid-unless that's."

Tom's head swam. Two pounds! Two pounds! Ah, that would set him on his feet! It would give him a start.

"Will that suit you?" "Yes," answered Tom eagerly.

"Right! Then get your things off. You'll be wanted in the ring in a quarter of an hour. I'll send Ben Adams to look after you. And don't forget this, my boy, that the lad who does his best for our sport goes us want of a job. You put up a good show, and count George Martin as a pal."

So saying, after patting Tom on the shoulder, the promoter vanished.

Among the people he went, and as he entered the hall he came upon an attendant who, clad in white flannel trousers and sweater much the worse for wear, with rubber-soled shoes upon his feet, was making for the dressing-rooms.

"Oh, Adams," said the promoter, "I've looked out to box George?" "What a bit of luck, sir! That saved the situation. There'd bin no

trying to get into them with all seriousness. Tom looked an absolute nidget. His face was pale and lined, his cheeks sunken. The hardships he had undergone during the last few days had added a seriousness to him which seemed to have aged him.

Ben Adams looked Tom up and down. "Are you the kid who's going to box George Martin?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Tom, looking Ben full in the eyes.

Ben scratched his head as he took in the lines of Tom's figure.

Young Belcher was a peculiarly built lad. His shoulders were decidedly good for such a boy, yet his arms, and it not been for the protruding knobby, would have been every of a skeleton.

The benches seemed small every-where, the vast almost fragrant. Tom's legs were thin, but in proportion, perhaps. His skin was white and shining as a girl's.

"Hi! He's knocked out by the first whizz of George Martin's glove," thought Ben Adams, "and it's a shame." Outwardly he smiled cheerfully as he saw a question in Tom's eyes.

"Do you know anything about boxing, my lad?" he asked.

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A FIGHTING CHANCE

(Continued from previous page)

"It's a swindle!"

The gloves were now produced and slipped on. Then the referee called the two fighters and bade them shake hands. As they stood side by side, the difference between them was more noticeable. George Martin was taller, broader, more powerfully built, better trained, and obviously better fed.

Ben took a good look at the face of health. Tom Belcher looked as white as a sheet, and more fit for a hospital bed than a boxing ring.

His pallor was unusual, however, and was the result of want of food and nervous excitement.

"Look at that fellow. How slim he is. His grooming opponent was almost pathos."

"I hope he'll be a fair fighter!" he said.

"Oh, I won't bet yet," answered Martin contemptuously.

Then they went to their respective corners, and after a pause the seconds were ordered out of the ring, and as he went, Ben Adams said:

"Skip about lively. Try and keep him off a corner for two kid, see as to make a bit of a show. See what I mean?"

Tom nodded, and then looked hurriedly at his opponent.

Everything seemed to swim round him. He heard a roar from the audience, and then saw George Martin's work which was crude, but even so it was effective, and in the third round, after maddening his opponent by driving the left into his eye, he stepped forward and landed a terrifically accurate jab home on the jaw of George Adams, started, against.

It did not seem possible that Tom Belcher's frail and awkward frame was able to land such a punch. There was Martin down, and he took eight long-drawn-out seconds in his time to rise into the argument.

When he got up he seemed unsteady, and after him went Tom Belcher, glancing in his handwork, and punching at his hands with a goal of his will in the world.

George Martin, whose courage was of doubtful consistency, covered up perhaps half an hour, but was afraid to face the determined and remarkable youngster, whose desperate need perhaps had made him so brave. And again Tom Belcher took the honours of the round.

Ben Adams was in an ecstasy by this time.

"That's right, kid!" he cried. "Stick to it like that, and you can't lose."

Yet the experienced bruiser noticed that Tom seemed very distressed.

"Are you feeling bad, kid?" he asked.

"I'm tired," answered Tom, "and faint. It's want of food."

"Well, go for him next round all right," said Ben.

At this moment he heard his name called, and, looking down, saw George Martin's promoter, standing by the ringside.

"Here, Adams," said the promoter angrily, "just tell your lad to hold his own, and let George's get to work. Understand?"

Adams nodded.

"For your sake," he said, "but in a whole lot of ways in Tom's case."

All right, he said, but in a whole lot of ways in Tom's case. It was a hard job for him to burricane next round, kid. Kick him, if you can. There's too many frame-ups in this box to please me. And it's the dearest wish of my life to see George Martin taken down a peg or two. I'm in a bit of a hurry, son, but Tom felt somewhat recovered. Martin came at him with a dangerous rush and tried to make a clinching fight.

Tom's eyes flashed, and he was away from the fellow, and he was punching at him again, hitting and working, and all points of front all over, and he was back the other gasping and thoroughly rattled.

Looked, George Martin had such little bits of fight, and the referee was being meted out to him by the unknown Tom Belcher, that at last, feeling that it would be impossible to hit him again, he threw himself in danger of being knocked out. He suddenly rose the gloves from his hands and hung them savagely on the ring floor.

"I've had enough of this," he shouted, so that all could hear. "He says I'm a fighter, and he's taking no good. Somebody else had better have a go."

His seconds tried to reason with the youth, but he would have none of it.

His father, blaving with anger, ordered him to put the gloves on again, and continue the fight, but the youth refused.

"I shan't," he shouted. "It's not fair fight. He never sought to have been his foot. And, almost last

bing, he jumped out of the ring, leapt to the floor, and made his way out of the hall amid the taunts and derisive shouts and hisses of the audience.

To say that the proprietor of the St. George's Hall was surprised and angry is to put it mildly. He was almost beside himself with rage. He had filled the hall by advertising the bout between his son and Jewey Mears, which would have been a hot thing for George. And now, after he had saved the situation by getting Tom Belcher to face his son, the latter had disgraced himself and injured his career as a boxer by quitting to an unknown, and he the smallest boxer who'd been inside a ring for many a long day.

While the audience cheered Tom to the echo, and Ben Adams and the other seconds made much fuss of the youngster as they dared with the promoter's eagle eyes watching them, Tom himself was staring about him in a dazed and bewildered kind of way, unable to realise what had happened to him.

"And I'll get the two pounds that gentlemen promised me," he asked, turning to Ben Adams.

"Of course, you will," said the second enthusiastically. "And, my eye, didn't you give it to that young braggart, my lad! Here, come along to the dressing-room, get into

Tom Belcher's face flashed.

"I've earned the money you promised me, sir!" he protested indignantly. "And I insist on being paid."

"Bravo, my lad!" said Ben Adams, and then he put the boy gently on one side, and leave this matter to the promoter. "Now, Mr. Martin, hand Tom Belcher over the two pounds you promised him like a good man. It's no go for me to get for liking him."

"He can go and fish for it!" he cried. "I'm no master here, I won't pay a bit more than I see fit to. That my boy George was to win, and you know it, Adams. You'd have thought that an unknown boxer would have stood any chance against him? He'd do the lad damage enough when the news gets round. And do you think I'm going to get paid for liking him?"

"He bit my fairly enough," blazed Tom angrily. "There's been too much dirty work done at this hall. Tom Belcher boxed like a champion. I've never seen any boy of his weight in the unscrupulous brought to be the first to admit it, Mr. Martin."

"If George had tried he could have felled him, the angry promoter. "He never expected even to have to fight for it. When he did find out that he was up against a good 'un, he put him off, and got kind of mad, and lost his head. And I told you, Adams, that George had got to draw the money."

"And I saw that I'd a natural born fighter on my side," answered Ben. "I'm not to let him get a penny of Belcher give the fight away, if he could win it. Be a sportsman. Arrange a return battle. It'll fill your pockets, Mr. Martin."

The promoter showed his teeth.

"Return match!" he repeated angrily. "Return match! You've won it, the both of you, or I'll ring for my attendants, and you've checked out neck and crop."

Ben Adams, however, said: "Tom Belcher will beat, not in the least disposed to forego the promised reward, which meant everything to him."

"And you shall have it, Tom!" said Ben Adams. "You can bet your money on it. It's all yours."

So saying, he advanced menacingly towards the promoter.

"Now," he roared, "hand over the cash, or I'll have my money's worth."

The promoter gave Ben one look, realised that he was dealing with a man at such a point, an electric bell, the button of which was set upon his desk.

If attendants weren't far away, a moment later Ben could hear them rushing up the stairs. Upon flew the door, and in they came four of them, and one of them, a potentially built as Ben himself allowed, they glanced indignantly at Ben and Tom, then looked at the manager.

George Martin pointed at Ben Adams.

"He's been threatening me, my lad, sir," said Tom. "Check him out of the hall, and understand he's not to be allowed to enter it again my time, or I'll sue him."

"Ben," said the one of them, hesitating, "we don't want a row. Hadn't you better go quietly?"

"The manager," Tom said, "labeled the manager. 'The boy was well!'"

The attendants hesitated. They were fully alive to the unimportance of the matter. They understood that they had secretly rejoiced at George Martin's defeat. Besides, they liked Ben, and they were also fully aware

that Ben had possessed a heavy punch, and was by no means to be despised, even though he had left Ben Adams no time to take up the duties of second, whip, or time attendant.

"What are you all gadding at?" howled George Martin. "If you don't get about 'em pretty soon, I'll get an entire new staff at my hall, and you'll be out of a job."

That settled it. They made up their mind, and two of them got hold of Tom Belcher, whilst the others stood guard over him.

But Tom in desperation threw them off, and Ben tripped one up, while he hung round, and then he cried, "Look here, boys, he's a world 'un, you love a bit of fair play, same's me. The trouble is that Mr. Martin refused to pay Tom Belcher the money he promised him. And all because he set about George, and looked him in a fair stand-up boxing contest. I ask you, is it right?"

"Hasn't he paid?" asked one of the men.

"And I don't intend to!" cried the promoter defiantly.

"Shame!" said one of the attendants, and Ben, taking his cue from that, advanced towards George Martin, his face set in a threatening frown.

"Now," he cried, "pay up, Mr. Martin, or else fight me man to man. It's one of our terms. Tom's going to have his money, or I'll have the money's worth."

"Up with the promoter!" he cried. "Up with the backslider!" he cried. "Take that!" he said, saying he aimed a savage right-hand blow at Ben's jaw. It did not land, for Ben's eyes were turned aside, and the next moment George Martin was lying on his back bit down with a stinging blow which had dropped him on the floor with a "thud."

"Now," cried Ben. "Get up, you dog, and fight me if you've got the guts, or else hand over the brass."

"Set about him, Ben!" chorused the attendants, who'd all been watching the scene, and the next moment one or more of them. "Give it him!"

George Martin rose to his feet and struck out.

"What!" he cried. "Are you all against me, then?"

"You've caused it. The lad deserves what he was promised, even if it was fifty quid. Ask the sportsmen who were here to stand up and examine every face, self-heating."

The promoter, I can get the truth published in the boxing papers, if I choose. Ben Adams recoiled in amazement. "If you do you any good, George Martin."

And then with an oath the promoter opened his drawer, took out the money, and put them on the side of the desk.

"There's your money!" he cried. "Take it. But I'll have my revenge on you for this, Ben Adams. I swear it."

Ben only laughed. He picked up the coin, and handed it to Tom Belcher. Then, putting his arm fondly round the boy's neck, he drew him gently to the door, and they went out together on to the landing.

"Thanks, boys, for standing by me," said the old pugilist as he looked back at the spectators, and went out into the street.

"Boy, what are you going to do?"

"I—I don't know," answered Tom, looking about him with a puzzled frowning.

"I suppose, lad, it's too late and my handily will be in bed."

"That's all right, then?" answered Ben.

"No, Mr. Adams."

"H'm!" said Tom. "You shall look like me. And you're strange 'uns, they will. You shall come along home with me. Old Ben Adams will look after you."

Tom, however, tired out, fagged, and fettered, but with two golden sovereigns, rubbing faces with each other, and a new word was beginning to form in his mind.

your things as quickly as you can, and we'll go and draw the money."

The 7th Chapter.

TOM FINES A PAL.

Tom Belcher felt as if he required the assistance of somebody who knew the ropes, and who would stand by the honest, good-hearted old pug, who had seconded him so willingly to accompany him to the office when he went to draw the money.

It is doubtful whether Tom Belcher ever dressed himself as swiftly as he did that day in the dressing-room.

Tom minutes after the contest had ended he and Ben Adams entered George Martin's office in the front of the building.

The promoter received them with a scowl, and frown of annoyance.

"Well," he said tartly, "what do you want?"

Tom made no reply. He was still feeling a bit fazed, and unsure about things. Ben Adams, however, spoke up.

"Tom Belcher has come for his money, sir," said the boy.

The promoter laughed derisively.

"Oh, has he?" he cried. "Well, he can go and get it for himself. He doesn't get a penny out of me."

Tom's face fell. Ben Adams's eyes flashed.

"You say no, Mr. Martin?" he asked.

"Because I don't choose to pay him!" answered the promoter, in an angry voice.

"I thought he was a good 'un, and I understood that they had secretly rejoiced at George Martin's defeat. Besides, they liked Ben, and they were also fully aware

that Ben had possessed a heavy punch, and was by no means to be despised, even though he had left Ben Adams no time to take up the duties of second, whip, or time attendant.

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By
ARTHUR S. HARDY.

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you things as quickly as you can, and we'll go and draw the money."

orders in the last round, Adams. Why didn't you obey them?"

"I couldn't rob the kid of his ability, ring as it was, Adams, to be a white heat. He's a boxing marvel, he is. And why shouldn't the contest have been fought on its merits? They've had seven more put-up jobs at this hall, Mr. Martin."

"Have there?" almost screamed the promoter, looking wildly and furious at his son's disgraceful defeat. "Well, you shan't see any more of him. I've had enough of you, Mr. Belcher. You'll never see me at my hall again after to-night. You can look out for another job."

"Well, you had better see the old boxer easily enough. That's understood. But what about the money you owe this lad?"

"He'll not get a single farthing of it!" howled the promoter. "I refuse to pay him. Boxers who work for me have to obey orders. You're clear out, both of you, or I'll send for my men and have you checked out!"

"Tom Belcher's face flashed.

"I've earned the money you promised me, sir!" he protested indignantly. "And I insist on being paid."

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Next Monday's Long Complete Story of TOM BELCHER the young boxing marvel is entitled: "Tom Belcher's Luck!"

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THE CIRCLE OF 13

BEING THE ADVENTURES OF HARVEY KEENE DETECTIVE

A Magnificent New Drama, Full of Thrilling Interest.

The 1st Chapter.

Introduces the Circle of 13.

"Are all here?" curly inquired the chief, as he seated himself in his accustomed place. "All but one, sir," a voice answered. "The Ferrer? has not arrived yet. But I think I hear him coming."

The last man quietly entered the council chamber, as quietly shut the door behind him, and sat down in the vacant place that was waiting for him. It was ten o'clock, and the Circle of Thirteen was complete. They were all assembled here, at a large, round table on which were writing materials, pipes, and tobacco. Thirteen of the most cunning, dangerous, and clever criminals in the world, drawn from various ranks of life, and wedged together into a lethal unit by a master mind and brain. An organization that had existed for years, and which had carried out a narratively brief period but which had left its records in the annals of crime, and all intently followed the efforts of the Scotland Yard.

A soft lamp, with a green shade, hanging from the ceiling of the council-room. It bore no resemblance to a chandelier, yet such it was. There were two secret entrances—one from the river, and the other from the big back door. The floor was covered with an expensive carpet, and the walls of whitewashed masonry were decorated with heavy cloth. The features of the Thirteen were disguised by masks of black crepe, behind the sockets of which their eyes glittered in a sinister, hollow light. They glanced at one another, and bent their gaze on the chief.

He rose to his feet, throwing away the end of a cigar. He was a man of large and powerful build, with a heavy brow and a massive nose. He had an aristocratic nose, and the haughty curve of it, dimly suggesting a hawk, had a way of reminding to call him "The Vulture."

In one name he owned the warehouse, which he had called this meeting. He had another name—his real one—he lived in a fine mansion on Hampstead Heath, mingled in financial circles in the City, and alone in some of the best society in the West End.

Before I speak of the object with which I have called this meeting, I would say that, in a dry, crisp tone, "I shall make a rather interesting announcement, Scotland Yard, having faith in their own skill to learn anything about us, are going to appeal to Harvey Keene to assist them."

"Harvey Keene, the prince of detectives? So he was to be put on the track of the gang! Condemnation could be read now in the eyes that sparkled beneath the masks. Now a word was uttered. For a few seconds the collar was very quiet.

Outside a gale was blowing, and the rain was drumming on the gravel on the forebridge under the wharf, and surging against the timber foundations of the warehouse. A

fussy little tug hooded in protest of something or other; and an anchor-line, leading proudly up the Thames, sent a warning shriek from its stern.

"The information is correct," the chief continued, with a shrug of the shoulders, "I got it through one of my usual sources. There is no need to be alarmed, however. Let Harvey Keene beware. We are more than a match for him, and all he shows at such a time is a damned fool. He will have no choice but to die."

There were low murmurs of approval, whispered oaths, and exclamations. Ferrer, murderous hatred gleamed in the twelve pairs of eyes that were fixed on the chief. "I have not much else to say to you," he went on, in a different tone. "As you are aware, we are within a week of the date mentioned in the eccentric will of the late Mr. Normanby. Our prisoner is secure. It is impossible that he can be found. Our only object, Mr. Bastabile, will claim and receive the fortune. The sum of ten thousand pounds will be had to me, and you will get your proportionate shares. I have an extra project in mind, but I will not explain it until the meeting of the Circle assembled in council. On the third night from now I will meet you at the 'Palace of Arts' at eight o'clock in the evening. That is all, comrades. You are dismissed."

There was a scraping of chairs and a shuffle of feet. The Circle of Thirteen rose from the table as one man, and moved to the door. A terrible and morose crew, each with his own sphere of crime, and most of them known by names typical of their vocations or personal characteristics. "The Baron," a languid handsome swell, a son of an illustrious family, once an officer in the Guards, and a famous figure in the drawing rooms of Mayfair and Belgrave, now a sinner and letter foe to society. "The Ferrer" and "The Weaver," lean, black-haired, and as cunning as an eel, and as vicious as serpents. "The Dwarf," a stout, tiny creature, who was usually devoted to his chief, and had a dog-like affection for him. "Nat the Penman," king of the forgers, and from Loazey, the engraver of banknote plates. "Flash Gram" and "Red Rufus," the expert craftsmen, Larry Fenton, the rascalous syndicator, "Cockney Bill," whose knowledge of the seamy side of London was unsurpassed, and Charles Male, the fount of information, who had been twice in the "Street" Service branches of several European Governments, and lastly Michael Dredg known as "The Spider," a forelorn man, as savage as a wild beast, who could be counted upon to commit any crime, and was usually a direct of compunction. There was yet another man who was associated with the gang, Ben Graton by name; but he was not a member of the Circle, nor was he present to-night.

The chief and the cell crew filed from the cellar, and ascended the stairs to the warehouse, and crept forth in the narrow, deserted street. The vulture followed, shutting and locking the doors behind him, and a few moments

later the Circle of Thirteen, some bound for their lodgings, others for the cafes and night clubs of the West End.

All were knit by a bond of loyal comradeship, and twelve of them had no secrets amongst themselves. But only the Dwarf knew what the chief's real name was, and where he lived.

The 2nd Chapter.

The Unfinished Message.

When a man has been a long time absent from his native land, and from the great mother of cities, London has a claim for him that does not wear off soon. It was so with Harvey Keene, the famous detective. He had been back for two or three weeks, yet when he entered his chambers between eight and nine o'clock one evening and switched on the light, he looked about him with a sense of pleasure that was almost as fresh as if he had been on the day of his return.

had a museum of crime, but he kept that in a locked closet. More than a year ago, after an operation due to a wound from a burglar's revolver, Harvey Keene had gone abroad by the advice of his physician. He had made a leisurely tour of the globe, acquiring knowledge that might or might not be of use to him. And now he was back, as strong and healthy as ever he had been, and longing to be busy at his profession.

"Ah, how good it is to be at home again!" he reflected. "There is no place like London!" The detective's boy, Oliver, a clever, precocious lad, was at cinema-place. Having loaded a blackened briar root pipe, and set it alight, Keene dropped into a basket from the table at his side. When he had opened and read them he rose to his feet, and began to pace the floor. His grey eyes were staring into

the empty air.

He had naturally fallen upon Philip Bastabile, who was a familiar figure in the West End, and who he was heavily indebted to for his income, and that he had denied all knowledge of his cousin, and the check that had been kept on his movements by day and night had been utterly fruitless.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Normanby had come to England, and the date stipulated in the will, the day on which the money was to be paid, had been stirred by the five thousand pounds must be claimed at the hour of noon, was less than a week off.

All this Harvey Keene knew. He had been resting for a fortnight, hoping day by day that the check would appear to him. And now he had his opportunity. He could be very terrible in his wrath, ruthless and merciless in the way he served no mercy, but he had the kindly heart of a child, and a warm and generous nature. His sympathies had been stirred by the wife's prayer for help, and he had been a trifle flattered by the request from the big building on the Embankment.

"These Scotland Yard chaps are all right," he said to himself half aloud, as he paced the floor. "They are clever enough. They could surprise me in a hundred ways. I shall try the wretch way about it. They work at a crime by rule, sticking to the old-fashioned methods instead of

vacancy, and there was a tense expression on his clean-shaven, masterful features. It is welcome opportunity," he murmured. "I have been waiting for a case, and nothing could appeal to me more than this does. I shall throw myself into it heart and soul."

One of the letters he had just read was from Sir William Fairfax, the Chief Commissioner of Police, requesting him to assist Scotland Yard in their hitherto futile efforts to bring the Circle of Thirteen to justice, and intimating that they were believed to have had a hand in the disappearance of Mr. Harold Normanby. The other letter, written at a lodging-house in Bloomsbury, was from Mrs. Alice Normanby, and in implored the detective, in earnest and pathetic language, that he would try to find her husband.

They were comfortable chambers, and well situated—a suite of five apartments, including a bath, on the first floor of a building in Princes Street, Cavendish Square. They were as quiet as could have been desired, though they were within sound of the melnstrom of traffic that roared and rattled at Oxford Circus from morning till night.

The incense sitting-room, which was at the front, had three windows that opened on to a balcony. The furniture was of black oak, and the Turkish carpets and rugs harmonised with the papering. There were deep couches and lounge-chairs, a writing-table and a roll-top desk, a rack filled with pipes, Keene's favourite pictures hung from the walls. His great, long violin, a Cremona was in a cabinet, and a porcelain tobacco jar held his strong, Turkish mixture. He

During his absence Harvey Keene had been kept informed in regard to what was happening in London, and since his return he had gone fully into such matters as had interested him. He had learned a great deal about the new stars in the firmament of crime, and he was familiar with the story of Mr. Harold Normanby.

In the course of an existence of less than a year the band of criminals had, by a series of amazing burglaries and robberies, startled London and had completely disappeared. When the old gentleman died, three years later, it was found that by the terms of his will his fortune of fifty thousand pounds was to go to one or other of his two nephews, subject to certain conditions. Should a nephew return, and claim the money on a fixed day and hour, it was to be paid to him in cash by the acting solicitor. Should he not put in a claim, then, to the very minute, the legacy was to be handed to Philip Bastabile, the other nephew.

The news had reached the ears of Harold Normanby through an old acquaintance whom he had encountered out on the Continent, where he had been living, and had married. He had sailed for home, and on his arrival in London, two months ago, he had gone to a restaurant off the Strand. Having called on the following morning at the office of his uncle's lawyer, and learned that he was out of town, he had decided that he would call again. He had remained at the hotel for a few days, and then, as he had not returned, he had mysteriously vanished.

Nothing had since been seen or heard of him, in spite of an exhaustive search by the police. In view of the circumstances, suspicion had naturally fallen upon Philip Bastabile, who was a familiar figure in the West End, and who he was heavily indebted to for his income, and that he had denied all knowledge of his cousin, and the check that had been kept on his movements by day and night had been utterly fruitless.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Normanby had come to England, and the date stipulated in the will, the day on which the money was to be paid, had been stirred by the five thousand pounds must be claimed at the hour of noon, was less than a week off.

All this Harvey Keene knew. He had been resting for a fortnight, hoping day by day that the check would appear to him. And now he had his opportunity. He could be very terrible in his wrath, ruthless and merciless in the way he served no mercy, but he had the kindly heart of a child, and a warm and generous nature. His sympathies had been stirred by the wife's prayer for help, and he had been a trifle flattered by the request from the big building on the Embankment.

"These Scotland Yard chaps are all right," he said to himself half aloud, as he paced the floor. "They are clever enough. They could surprise me in a hundred ways. I shall try the wretch way about it. They work at a crime by rule, sticking to the old-fashioned methods instead of

vacancy, and there was a tense expression on his clean-shaven, masterful features. It is welcome opportunity," he murmured. "I have been waiting for a case, and nothing could appeal to me more than this does. I shall throw myself into it heart and soul."

One of the letters he had just read was from Sir William Fairfax, the Chief Commissioner of Police, requesting him to assist Scotland Yard in their hitherto futile efforts to bring the Circle of Thirteen to justice, and intimating that they were believed to have had a hand in the disappearance of Mr. Harold Normanby. The other letter, written at a lodging-house in Bloomsbury, was from Mrs. Alice Normanby, and in implored the detective, in earnest and pathetic language, that he would try to find her husband.

They were comfortable chambers, and well situated—a suite of five apartments, including a bath, on the first floor of a building in Princes Street, Cavendish Square. They were as quiet as could have been desired, though they were within sound of the melnstrom of traffic that roared and rattled at Oxford Circus from morning till night.



The detective lifted the motionless figure of Harold Normanby in his arms, and carried him forward into the chamber that had been exposed.

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THE CASE OF THE CIRCLE OF 33

BEING THE ADVENTURES OF HARVEY KEENE DETECTIVE.

(Continued from previous page.)

"I kept me in a cold shiver. I would have been missed, of course, and my master might have guessed that I had gone to London, and sent a wire to those devils. If they were to learn that I had come to you I should be murdered before you could see me."

"Don't be alarmed. I will protect you. And now tell me where Mr. Normandy is."

"He is Norfolk, sir, at—" "The man paused, the sentence frozen on his lips by a creaking noise. The door had just quietly opened to within half a dozen inches, and a hand that clutched a revolver had been pushed through. Harvey Keene did not see the hand. He heard the sharp report of the weapon, and saw the little man stagger and fall. "Thank you," he murmured, and he whistled by the detective's ear, and smashed the tobacco jar that was on the cabinet.

"The assassin was in flight, clattering down the stairs as hard as he could tear. Keene at once gave chase, risking his neck as he dashed into the hall, and then on to the door. The lower door was open, and by the time he had dashed out to the street the fog had thickened and disappeared. He had melted into a thick mist that hung in the air, and it would have been useless to seek for him. He had not seen the man, and he did not know in which direction he had gone."

"Jove, I have lost the second!" he muttered. "It is a thousand pities."

All was quiet. No alarm had been raised. The men who were in the room were muffled by the looking of several taxicabs that had passed at the moment.

"The fainting sense of apprehension gripped Harvey Keene. He hastened up the stairs and into his sitting-room. He looked at the door, and he saw the limp, prostrate figure on the floor his worst fears were realized. The assassin's bullet had sped true, straight through the head of the little man. Blood was trickling from his chest, and his sightless eyes were staring at the ceiling.

"Quite dead," Keene said aloud. "He was shot by one of that gang of devils who have been killing folk off from what he told me. He is dead, and he has taken his secret with him to eternity. What a misfortune!"

"The detective stared helplessly at the body in so large an area as the county of Norfolk."

"This cold-blooded murder had stirred to the very depths the stern and ruthless side of Harvey Keene's nature. There was in his eyes a savage glitter that was seldom seen there. An insolent, daring challenge had been flung in his teeth, and he meant to take it up. The veins on his forehead were throbbing passion. "For these evil men beware," he told himself. "They will learn to respect what it is to be a person on their track. I will never rest, never relax my efforts until I have exterminated the Circle of Thirteen. I will be satisfied when every one of them has been brought to the gallows. By heavens, I swear it!"

"He was not to be the gull. He had a meagre one as yet. Keene knelt again by the body and searched the pockets. He drew from them a knife and a watch, a pair of gloves, a hat, and a railway ticket. That was all. There were no letters or papers. "But one thing was worth noting. But the tin slip of pastboard was an important discovery. It was the return half of a third-class ticket on the Great Northern from Bruntdall to London. Keene nodded with satisfaction as he glanced at it. He knew where the ticket was good for."

"Ah, this will do!" he murmured. "It will be easy for me to learn who the man is. I shall then know where the ticket is good for, and in renewing him I shall probably catch some of the gang of Thirteen."

"At all events, I am pretty sure to get a lead, and that will send them to their secret. But I must be careful."

The gang will be on their guard. They may make an attempt on my life to-night, and they will try again."

"He filled and lit a pipe, and sat down in a large chair, and a few minutes passed by with a wreathing smoke. He sank into a reverie, and he was so deeply absorbed that he did not hear the door open. He heard the detective's young assistant, had come back."

"He was a wiry little lad, broad-foreheaded and precocious, with a shrewd, frank face. He had been born and bred in the East End, in the slums of Whitechapel, and he had been trained by a criminal father, and practically adopted him, and taken him with him on his own adventures."

"The lad shut the door, and stepped forward; then stopped at sight of the dead man on the floor.

"'What's wrong?' he gasped. "'Murder!' Harvey Keene replied, looking up.

"'In 'ere, guv'nor?'" "In 'ere, not an hour ago."

"'Who's 'e? And who killed 'im?'" "I don't know, my boy. The assassin had not left a long stone, or so they grouped ahead, guided by ink-black walls of foliage that shut them off from the road, and they were listening. They perceived to the left a small building that stood back a little from the road. And by a second glancing they saw a hanging sign-board, and read the inscription that was painted on it:

"THE FALSTAFF ARMS. Ben Grinstead."

"Here was a welcome shelter from the tempest. An ancient, unadorned inn, where doubtless good cheer and good food were to be had at a certain window, and the door was unlocked. Harvey Keene opened it, and he and his young assistant stepped in. A fire log was burning on the hearth, casting a ruddy glow on the stained floor, and the tables on the landing, and the bar, and the counter. Keene stamped his feet twice, and murmured some words to his young companion, who, with a beefy complexion.

"'Mr. Grinstead, I believe,'" said the landlord, who, with a beard and a white hair, and a pair of eyes under the bill, and he had to leave it there. "I suppose you can put us up for the night?"

"I am sorry, sir, but I can't do it."

"Why not?" "I have no servants at present, for one thing. And this is more of a public-house than an inn."

"The landlord passed abruptly, with a slight start, staring hard at Keene. For an instant a venomous glitter passed over his cheeks, and flushed back. "I shouldn't like to turn a dog away on such a night as this. But you may be in a hurry."

"I'll give you a room, sir, if that's all you want."

"That is all," the detective quietly replied. "We had something to eat."

"Very well, sir. Shall I show you up?" "Yes, my good fellow. We are tired and sleepy."

Keene had observed the man's brief remark, but it flashed a staggering theory to his mind. But not by the faintest sign did he betray his feeling. He followed the man he followed. Grinstead, who, having lit a candle, led them up a rickety staircase, and then up a narrow passage, and he put the candlestick on the mantelpiece, and withdrew.

"Good-night, sir," he said, as he shut the door. "The chamber was a fairly large one, and the walls were panelled with black oak. The furniture consisted of a double bed, a chest of drawers with a mirror on it, several chairs, and a stand that held a jug and basin. The room was clean and comfortable, and when Harvey Keene placed his bag on a chair, and opened it. He took out a revolver, a pocket-knife, and a revolver, and slipped them into his pocket.

"I thought you would be doing that," he remarked Oliver.

"'Why did you?'" asked the detective.

"'Because the landlord knows who you are, and he means mischief. I'll bet you saw his eyes flash at you, sir.'"

"'Yes, my boy. I saw it. I wonder why.'"

"'I can easily account for it,'" declared the young man, who, with a thud and lightning had struck him, and the wind had blown to a calm.

that poor fellow in my sitting-room in Prince's Street. The man was engulfed here, and Grinstead followed him to London, and murdered him. He became a villain. A fairly bold one. But fate has guided us to our destination. Oliver. We are in a very good way of catching the man. Harold Normandy is a prisoner somewhere in or beneath the Falstaff Arms, and one of the members of the Circle of Thirteen is probably on the premises as well. I am not surprised that the landlord was at first reluctant to accommodate us."

"He changed his tune after he recognized you," said the lad.

"I am sure, more than willing to take me in there."

"So that he could murder us, guv'nor. That's the game."

"Oliver was an affable fellow, and Harvey Keene, though he did not feel quite so confident as his words had suggested. He was glad to be here, and he was glad to see that his escape had there been an immediate opportunity of doing so. If he were to take to his heels, he would have disappeared with their prisoner by the time he had returned with the revolver. He was not a student of theory at present. He must satisfy himself, if possible, that his suspicions were correct."

"You think there is any chance of our being able to find and rescue Mr. Normandy?" whispered the lad.

"There was another matter on his mind now, and that was the question of the man who had been shot here and there, scrutinizing the whole apartment with vigilant eyes that had been trained to detect every detail. The inmates of the inn would have disappeared with their prisoner by the time he had returned with the revolver. He was not a student of theory at present. He must satisfy himself, if possible, that his suspicions were correct."

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rain was still falling, however, and it did not stop. The soft, drumming patter of it, and the trickle from the leaves, were the only sounds that broke the silence of the night for more than an hour. And then Keene's sleepers caught a creaking noise and a shuffling tread. Oliver had heard the noise.

"My word, they've come for us!" he breathed.

"Stay where you are," said the detective.

"In a trice he was out of bed and over at the door. After listening for a moment he quickly unlocked the door and drew the bolt. And when he whipped the door open the next instant electric torch was flashing in his right hand.

"Ben Grimston, a smoking cap on his head, was crouching in the passage, and another, who quickly bunched off at right angles, the startled, retreating figures of two men were melting into the gloom.

"Keene roared inquired.

"I forgot to ask what time it is," he said.

"You can call me at seven o'clock."

"Very well, sir."

"Of course. Who were those two men I saw running away?"

"I was alone. You couldn't have seen any other man."

"I thought I did, but I may have been mistaken. Good-night!"

Midnight, sir.

When Mr. Grimston moved off, Harvey Keene slant the door, locked and bolted it, and returned to the bed.

"The cunning rogues!" he muttered, as he lay down. "I gave them a surprise."

"What do you suppose their game was, guv'nor?"

"They imagined that we might be awake and taking, and that they would learn whether or not we had any suspicions."

"They will come back again, I'll bet."

"I don't think so, my boy. Knowing that we are not to be caught napping, the rascals will leave us in peace, and let us depart in the morning. And soon after we have gone they will smuggle young Normandy out of the way, and will laugh at their sleeves at us if we fetch the police here. They have the best of it, I am afraid. I don't see much chance of

us going to search for Mr. Normandy," interrupted Oliver.

"No, that would probably cost us one eye," the detective declared.

"We had better let well enough alone."

"He was convinced now that his best course was to sleep, and that he was likely to be baffled by craft against which he was powerless. Ben was going to have his belief, as he did, that he and the lad were not in peril.

"We needn't worry, my boy," he continued. "The door is secure, and so is the window. You can sleep if you like."

"Right you are, guv'nor," was the reply.

There was no further conversation. Half an hour elapsed. Oliver was peacefully snoring, and Keene was on the point of falling asleep, when he heard a faint, grating noise. As he sat up, drowsy and confused, he saw a singular pattern of brilliant light that widened as he looked at it. A secret panel in the wall, to one side of the door, was sliding open.

Through the opening, Ben Grimston with a lantern, followed by eight or nine men whose features were hidden in make-up, advanced toward him.

"There they are!" the lined eyes exclaimed. "Be quick!"

"The lad was now awake, but he was too drowsy to get himself, and had Keene, so soft was the rush of the intruders. A blow from a clubbed mallet, sent Oliver on to the floor, and the detective, still in bed, was floundering with nervous fingers for his revolver when he was seized by the throat.

"For a few seconds he struggled desperately, and then, as he was tapped on the head with a cudgel, his head struck the floor, and he lay motionless. What was to be done? One of the band, the tallest of all, had been quietly standing aloof, through the shaft of light, and his eyes glittered with malignant fury as he bent down on the prisoners.

"Fetch them along," he bellowed. "We will bind and gag them in the dungeon, not here. Lead the way, Grimston," he sobbed.

Another Harvey Keene nor the lad had been struck, save the force. They were not invariable. But they were in

a half-dazed state, and by the time they had returned to full consciousness they had been carried from the upper part of the inn to what was obviously an extensive stretch of cellars beneath the ancient building. Each was in the grasp of four of the masked men, who were traversing a damp, stone-walked corridor. In front went Ben Grimston, flashing the rays of his lantern.

"There were cellars at intervals to right and left. For some yards the party pressed on in silence, under tramping footsteps of celebrators. The floor was rough, and at length catching his foot in a crevice, the landlord tripped and fell howling. And the lantern, flying from his hand, shot through an open doorway into a small chamber that was littered with packing-cases, sacks, and heaps of straw. There was a muffled explosion. The oil from the lantern fell in all directions, and at once the inflammable stuff took fire and blazed to the sky, kindled ceiling over head.

"By heavens, we'll never get that out!" Ben Grimston cried in horror.

"Half of you stay with me!" exclaimed the tall leader of the band.

"The rest will dispose of the prisoners, and return as quickly as they can!"

Four of the masked men remained with the leader, and the other four hurried on with the landlord, dragging the captives by the arms. They had not much farther to go, nor did

covered from the blow that had dazed them, and fortunately their captors had not searched them. Harvey Keene had left his revolver in the back-chamber, but his electric torch was in his pocket. He took it out and played the light around him, revealing a small, bare chamber that had clearly been converted, centuries ago to serve the purpose of a dungeon. Floor, walls, and ceiling were of stone.

"We appear to be securely caged," murmured the detective, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"There isn't any chance for us at all," said Oliver miserably. "We shall starve to death in this awful hole."

"Listen, my boy! What was that?"

"I thought I heard something, guv'nor."

"Here it is again! Hark!"

"A faint, low sound, like a voice calling in distress, quivered on the silence for a moment. It came from the left, where the dim outlines of a door that had once been there and had been blocked up. And suddenly the truth flashed to his mind.

"It must be young Normandy who is calling!" he cried. "He is in an adjoining dungeon, and there may be some way to escape from it. We must get at him."

"How can we?" inquired Oliver.

Keene answered in two words. He

motionless figure. It was that of a man of perhaps thirty, fair and slimly-built, and the detective lifted him in his arms, and carried him forward into the chamber that had been exposed.

"Is he dead?" asked Oliver.

"No, thank Heaven!" Keene replied. "He is breathing. He is only unconscious. None of his limbs are broken, and I don't think he can be severely injured."

"He is Mr. Normandy of course?"

"There can be no doubt of it, my boy. "He is the missing man."

"Well, guv'nor, it won't be any good to him or to us that we have found him. We aren't any better off than we were before. This is as bad a trap as the other."

"It was a tighter one. It had absolutely no exit, save by the opening the detective had made. There was no trace of a door or walls, or floor, or ceiling. Harvey Keene's eyes roved everywhere, while he played the glow from his electric torch, and when he had finished there was an expression of utter bewilderment on his face.

"I don't understand it," he said. "How did they get young Normandy here?"

"It is a bit of a puzzle, guv'nor, and no mistake!"

"But there is an explanation of the matter. There must be. And yet I cannot imagine how."

The detective paused abruptly, listening to a vague, murmuring

rapidly down, as nimble as a cat, and presently he called in a tone of relief.

"Right! he guv'nor! Only to my knee. "Hold the light up!" bade his master. "I am coming!"

Having hoisted the limp, insensible form of the youth up to his shoulder, Harvey Keene leaved himself through the trap. Slowly and carefully he descended the ladder until the wicket was safely reached the bottom, and stood by Oliver's side, in a shallow, tawny floor that lapped his knees and washed softly against the end of the passage. His heart was filled with gratitude. He was confident that he would find some means of escape from the clutches of the dreaded Circle of Thirteen.

"Go on, my boy!" he said. "Move quickly, and be careful!"

The lad went first, carrying the light, and Keene followed with the rescued man on his shoulder. They were in a narrow passage, but they should slip. For a hundred yards they traversed a subterranean shaft that was a dozen feet in width. The silvery rays of the electric torch gleamed on the walls of slimy masonry, and pierced the gloom ahead with quivering reflections that sounded like the murmur of the flood.

"What date is this?" the detective suddenly inquired, in a sharp, impatient tone.

"Thursday the fifteenth," Oliver answered promptly.

"Then to-morrow is the sixteenth. I thought so."

"What of it, guv'nor!"

"Have you forgotten?" said Keene. "The time-limit stated in the will of the late Mr. Robert Normandy has nearly expired. A fortune is at stake. At twelve o'clock to-morrow Normandy must appear in person at the office of William Drysdale, solicitor, of King's Bench Walk, Temple. If he fails to do so, the fortune will go to his cousin, Philip Bastable, who has bargained with the Circle of Thirteen. This poor fellow, who is nearly as young as I am afraid, at present, has a chance of likely to lose the sum of fifty thousand pounds. He is unconscious, perhaps perhaps injured. He may even die. I am afraid, at present, that there is little chance of his being able to put in his claim. It must be after midnight, and we are more than a hundred miles from London. And we cannot count to a certainty on escaping from here."

"I'm getting deeper," the lad interrupted.

"Here was a fresh source of peril. The passage had begun to descend at the base of the cliff, and the fugitives waded on the water gradually until it was always their waists. The water still increased, and they were almost in danger of submerging to the breast, when the flare of the torch showed them a welcome sight that revived their courage. They were near to the end of the shaft. Another dozen yards brought them to an arched opening, low and narrow, that was partly concealed by a screen of bushes. And here, tied to a ring in the wall, was a small boat that was floating at the water's level, which held it. It was there a pair of oars.

"Thank Heaven!" said the detective.

He heaved the limp figure of Harold Normandy to the bottom of the little craft, and climbed over the gunwale. Oliver followed, and loosed the rope that fastened the boat to the wall. The water was now up to their chests, and they were near to the end of the shaft. Another dozen yards brought them to an arched opening, low and narrow, that was partly concealed by a screen of bushes. And here, tied to a ring in the wall, was a small boat that was floating at the water's level, which held it. It was there a pair of oars.

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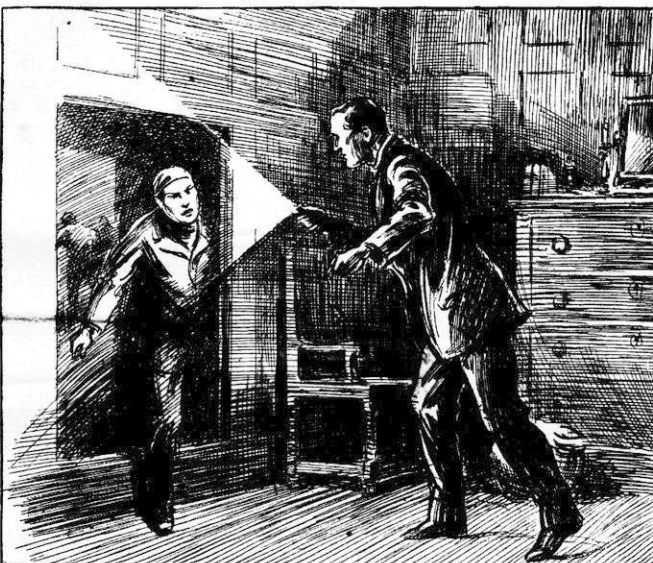
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The light from Harvey Keene's electric torch revealed the form of Ben Grimston, the landlord, crouching in the doorway. "What are you doing here?" the detective inquired coolly.

they need a light. The red glare of the flames guided them to the end of the corridor, where Ben Grimston knelt and raised a square trapdoor on his hinges. A perpendicular ladder reached into the gloom below, but the men did not wait to descend it. Harvey Keene and the lad were lowered through the aperture, and dropped into a space. They fell a distance of several yards, and landed with a thud that flung them on their backs. In a trice a scene was on his feet, and with ready presence of mind he seized the ladder as it was about to be hauled up. Twice he targeted it with all his strength, and at the third effort he wrenched it from those who were leading it.

"Care them," snarled a voice from above. "What are we to do?"

"It won't make any difference," another of the party replied. "They can't escape. Come, we must help to fight the fellow."

With that the trapdoor was slammed down, and it was so thick and massive that not an echo of the retreating footsteps overhead penetrated to the ears of the two prisoners. They were in pitch darkness, and in a damp, low atmosphere. But they had not lost all hope. They had re-

ceived the torch to the lad, and then, packing up the ladder, he attacked the wall with it. He had undertaken a difficult task, but he persevered. For five minutes he rained a storm of blows with all his might, harder and harder. And at last, when the ladder was beginning to split, the ancient masonry yielded to the battering assault.

It crumbled, and sagged, and collapsed, and toppled inward with a dull crash, clearly exposing the framework of timber. The dust of ages slowly fell, and there was seen, lying on the floor, the head and shoulders of a man whose body was buried beneath a mass of debris.

"All these are all," exclaimed Keene. "It is Harold Normandy! But I fear I have killed him!"

"No, he is not dead," said Oliver. "He is only unconscious. He will come to when he has had a good rest."

"Yes, I believe we shall be able to give those miserable pigs," Keene's eyes glared, "the shade that a shaft of some kind at the outlet. But the next must be evolved at present, owing to the heavy rains. It has flooded the passage."

"First, my boy," he added, "and tell me what the strength is. Be quick. Every moment is precious. I shall be here."

"The lad needed no second bidding. Taking the torch with him, he swung into the yawning abyss, and went

noise that had reached his ears. He gazed about him for a few seconds, and then, stooping across the dinginess, he kicked aside a heap of straw that had been used as a bed, and disclosed to view a small square trapdoor, which he raised with his rusty iron ring, and saw beneath him a black chasm. A ladder sloped into it, and from below floated a musing, hypnotic sound.

"The mystery is clear now," he cried. "There is an underground passage which leads to the Yucca. The passage was made by the mouth of it by heat of course, and thence on foot. What a fortunate discovery! I have found it."

"It means that we can all escape, doesn't it?" exclaimed Oliver.

"Yes, I believe we shall be able to give those miserable pigs," Keene's eyes glared, "the shade that a shaft of some kind at the outlet. But the next must be evolved at present, owing to the heavy rains. It has flooded the passage."

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THE SLACKER'S TRIUMPH!

(Continued.)

Blessed if we're going to use it as a locally ornamental!"

"I shall move to the door of the hut," said This.

"I'll get out of this," he said then. "This is not my blood bed. Won't you fellows ever learn to play the game?"

"You mean a minute," said one of the fellows, "thinking hard for a few moments. It is worth more in my mind that the Leigh station would have been the last word in brilliance, and he was not very scrupulous about enlisting fellows from other villages if he thought them good enough."

"Well," asked Mervale, "I was thinking," began Whyman, "that you might like to play for us. We'll make it well worth your while if you will."

"Mervale's face, as he stood in the doorway, went lily. "You mean I'll bribe me to play?" "You mean I'll bribe me to play?" he asked ominously. "If you put it like that, yes."

"Then you're a bigger case than I imagined. For two pence I'd wipe the floor with you, but— Bah! You're not worth it!"

"You'll regret not having accepted my offer when the cup's in our keeping," said Whyman.

"Not I! My only regret will be that with a decent trophy should fall into the hands of worms like you!" But there was a chance of preventing that.

"How?" asked Whyman and Wake together.

"By entering Grayshot for the cup. Whyman almost fell down.

"What do you say?" he gasped feebly.

"I'm not in the habit of repeating all my remarks," was the stiff reply; "but I don't mind obliging you on this occasion. The man going in to see us in our village by look or by hook, so that your previous scheme will be knocked on the head."

"You mean to say you expect to play?" asked Whyman.

"Exactly. Two Leigh fellows started at each other with convulsed faces. They threw themselves upon the floor of the hut and roared with laughter.

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared Whyman. And Dick strode from the hut, laughing at the level fellow who had been a fond observer, and shrieking hysterically on his other.

for him overcame all Roy's scruples. He set out sharply along the path.

"I'll make short work of this," he murmured. "Half a mile, that's all. Don't suppose I shall knock up against any German spurs."

Never had so few a horse was thumping pretty furiously as he came up to the little hut which stood in its isolated glory by the railway. There were strange romances connected with that hut—legends in which the words "haunted" and "spectral" played a prominent part.

Some indefinable instinct drew Roy to the spot, and he fairly flung in his shoes on hearing muffled voices from within the building. Who could be there at that hour?

There was a small window to the hut, and towards the Roy steadily crept. His first impulse had been to take to his heels, but only for a short time since he had belonged to the local troop of Boy Scouts, where he had learned that such an action as he now contemplated would have been regarded as the last word in funk. So he came cautiously up to the

pleasant form, "and that's why we came here to-night, fipped Wake. I've got an idea that we shall run into a very useful person just directly. What's the time? Gosh eight? Then he'll be along at any minute now. Let's prepare for action!"

"Wonder what the little game is?" mused Roy, drawing back behind a clump of furze. "It's going to collar somebody, or I'm a Dutchman. 'T would be as well to wait."

No sooner had he crunched into position behind the friendly furze-bush than a crackling of leaves was heard in the distance, and the sound soon resolved itself into a man's heavy tread.

The door of the hut creaked a little as it was opened from within, and Roy waited events. His whole frame trembling with excitement as he crept through the darkness.

The whole atmosphere seemed charged with electricity. Roy felt that if something didn't happen soon his heart would burst.

"Collar him!"

The tension was immediately relieved at Whyman's shout. The stranger, blissfully unaware of the trap he had for him, walked out the arms of the two Leigh fellows, almost before he knew they were there.

Roy had risen quickly to his feet, but he saw that, for the moment at least, he was not wanted.

"Hands off!" exclaimed the man

out his right fist, which the other dodged; but a second later Wake was on him like a tiger, and he found himself with his back to the wall of the hut, hitting out desperately.

It was at this point that Roy took it upon himself to intervene. He was in for it now, he felt. He had been wooding at different intervals all through the day whether a situation like this would ever turn up. A wild idea of doing something to restore his self-respect and his credit in the eyes of the village prompted him to act as he did.

Getting in the fray, Roy hit out with all his force, and experienced a curious thrill as his fist went home. It was a peck blow from a scintillating point of view, but it caught Bruster Whyman in a vulnerable spot, and he went down like a log.

"Good shot!" said the stranger approvingly, as he sought to avoid the tiger like clutch of Wake. "Just set on his chest a jiffy, there's a good fellow, while I put the kybosh on this lot."

Roy promptly deposited his nine-stone of British boyhood on Whyman's chest, and the Bruser gave vent to sundry grunts of pain.

In a moment more Wake landed with a crash by the side of his leader, with that feeling of utter collapse which always accompanies a blow in the part about the waistcoat.

Apparently the previous pair of plotters had caught a-larger.



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window, which was opened a few inches, and listened with all his ears. "We must collar him, or die in the attempt!" a gruff voice was saying.

Roy Phillips felt his knees hanging together. He had read so many stories of impossible highwaymen of late that he really believed for a moment that the hut was infested with those desperadoes. The words he next heard, however, reassured him, for they were in the tones of Bruster Whyman, right back for Leigh.

"Fifty quid! And we can't afford to be too scrupulous in our methods of getting it. Old Jacobs, in Kingsclere, will pawn the blessed cup; but if we've locked Wake it runs."

"There's no need to look on the black side of things," said Wake. "What's to prevent our winning the County Cup?"

"Lots of things. If we happen to run up against a stronger combination where the chips come from—whacked to the wide! All the fouling and ankle-tapping in the world won't save us."

"Then we must look to it that we held the strongest eleven we can possibly get together. It doesn't matter where the chips come from. We'll make 'em swear they were all born at Leigh. Because Mervale was too big a fool to see where his interests lay, it doesn't follow that other fellows'll be the same. There's such things as bribery and corruption."

"Quite so," said Whyman, with an

fortunate pedestrian, as Whyman and Wake tumbled him up against the side of the hut. "What's the game?"

"We shouldn't hurt you," said Wake reassurance. "All we want you to do is to say a few questions concerning the County Cup, which Earl Winterton is offering to the best village team."

"I can quite understand that you won't hurt me," said the stranger, who had now recovered from the strange assault. "I'd give as good as I get. What do you wish to ask me in connection with the cup?"

"We'd like you to play for Leigh," growled Whyman, coming to the point.

"Ah!" said the man thoughtfully. "I am much obliged to you for the offer—much obliged—but then, you see, I only play with sportsmen."

"But Whyman clenched his fists hard.

"I'm not going to parley with you," he said. "I've made you the offer, and you can take it or leave it. If you play, we'll make it well worth your while, and if you won't, we'll give you a thundering good hiding here and now."

"I always thought you Leigh fellows were pretty contemptible second-class," said the stranger; "but I didn't think you'd run at me. I would resort to bribery and black mail."

"Does that mean you won't?" asked Whyman thickly. "I play for sportsmen only, as I said before, but for rank outsiders!" With a snarl of rage, Whyman shot

"Roy was on the point of saying 'Well, I've not stuff on evasions, unless, how I say it," commented Mr. Steer. "Our forward line is generally in good working order. But you're a gully marvel. It's through you that Deepdale's at the top of the league. I've seen reports of the snatches in the 'Gray-shot Gazette.'"

"I'm glad I am able to do something," said Roy modestly. "Whyman and Wake are awful scoundrels," he observed, said Steer. "And now, what return can I make for your pluck?"

"Rats!" most emphatically, when a sudden idea flashed across his mind. Why, he thought, should he not avoid the help of Strong Steer's services to help him put himself right in the eyes of the village? It would be a good thing on Saturday. I'll be pleased to put you through your paces. But, of course, I can't guarantee your first-class form in a ball in a few days."

"No, of course not," said Roy. "What else I find you, Mr. Steer, and how often you'll be coming."

"I shall be at the Deepdale ground every day between twelve and three."

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Roy. "I work in Kingsclere, only a few minutes from the ground, so whenever I can put in half an hour every day in my lunch time."

"That's the way!" said the player-manager warmly. "We'll begin to-morrow. It's a grand idea. God bless! Now, I must be off! Good-night—or good-morning!"

"Good-night, your Phillips. See you to-morrow."

And Sammy Steer, professional, was swallowed up in the darkness.

"Player-manager of Deepdale's?"

"That's me!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Roy, zzzang his hat, "if you hadn't been in that setup form."

"This beats the band! But you're a gully marvel. It's through you that Deepdale's at the top of the league. I've seen reports of the snatches in the 'Gray-shot Gazette.'"

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The 4th Chapter. Things Begin to Move.

Everybody, even the Grayshot fellows themselves, had voted Dick Mervale hopeless as a man to attempt to raise a team for the County Cup. The utter absurdity of such a proposition had been made so plain, even among the low-witted country folk.

But there was method in Dick's madness. Almost everybody kept his men hard at work potting and golf, and his unbounded enthusiasm in the town became notorious among Whyman and Teddy Banks, as well as some of the other fellows, began to cast a glance at the man who was thought more than a mere dog's chance.

Some critics averred that Grayshot would be beaten in the first round by the best team of the county, but they would not play on the last moment. Both sets of critics were wrong. Grayshot drew a brace.

Whyman's jealousy rejoiced greatly at this stroke of luck if he gave him breathing-space, and he had more time in which to lick his team into shape.

Leigh, in the first round, were drawn to play Mirfield on the latter's ground, and the Grayshot fellows, who had come and camped, returning home with no end of swagger at having beaten a fifth-rate village eleven by four goals to one.

When the draw for the second round became known, the Grayshot fellows might well have wished the very best of good luck to the team that they were to be pitted against Abbeystead, a hoity, bustling eleven, which they regarded as a grand haul gone well into double figure territory.

Then came the bombshell! The entries were announced, and the wags of the village set to work on it. By what the local paper described as a "dashing and determined play," they gave the formidable opponents a terrific drubbing, sending them home to ruminate on a 2-0 result.

Two factors accounted for this startling victory—Mervale's enthusiasm and Teddy Banks' gook-playing. Dick was a fine player and an excellent captain. He had a clever work for all his men, and no piece of good play escaped his notice. Consequently,

(Continued on the next page.)

THE SLACKERS' TRIUMPH!

By GEORGE RICHMOND



(Continued from previous page)

every member of the eleven speedily developed into a hard grafter, and the easy manner in which Grayshott had won approval of Abbeville, won them his respect.

Stimulated by their success, the team proceeded from victory to victory, until at length they reached the final, with Leigh as their opponents. And all this time the Phillips had been taking lessons under the able tuition of Sammy Steer. At first he thought himself doomed to failure, for it was found that he lacked speed; but the resourceful Steer had placed him between the posts, and was turning him into a highly efficient goal-keeper.

For long afterwards did Roy remember those thrilling half-hour bouts with the professional Slacks, won reluctantly in upon him from all sides, and he would return to the little publishing office with smarting heads but undimmed resolution.

And now he felt that it was all in vain. Grayshott had their goal-keepers—Teddy Banks—whom they would not get with for outside help. Teddy had already acquitted himself like a Trojan. Who would think, then, of calling upon Roy?

There were bitter thoughts to the boy. All his energy and ability, fanned into flame by Sammy Steer, seemed to be hidden, as it were, under a blanket. In the eyes of Grayshott he would still be the same old slacker.

And when his brother Dick returned from the Lehigh's football fields what proof could Roy give him that he had bucked up? Not even that. Merivale knew all the secret visits to Sammy Steer, so there would be time to say a good word for him.

Had Roy succumbed to these miserable reflections, and returned to his old ways, this story would not have been written. It was Sammy Steer who gave the boy complete resistance.

"You're improving wonderfully," said the professional Slacker, on reaching the final, after Roy had been busily engaged in stopping all manner of shots—high and low, fast and slow, and with a strategy of giving anything in the nature of speed. "Well, I should say you're the equal of young Banks, and therefore son of the famous junior custodian in the county."

"And what's the good?" Roy exclaimed bitterly. "A victory under the final, but they can do without me. And no other team wants to engage a goal-keeper at the end of the season. 'Tut, tut!' said Steer. "Just you wait, my son. I've been at the game longer than you, if you'll excuse my saying so, and I can see things in a different light. You'll be wanted yet."

"What makes you think so?" asked Roy, looking doubtful.

"The professional lowered his voice. "Between you and me and the boys," he said, "I've seen it done before. You'll be some fine play on the part of those Leigh chaps. They mean to pull this thing off somehow, or other. And you'll be their most valuable asset. If they can put one of your chaps out of action before the match they'll do so."

"I say, that's pretty tricky," exclaimed Roy.

"It's none the less true, though. If you're not well prepared, they might be wotted. It isn't in my line, you stand a chance of playing in some other position."

Roy nodded thoughtfully and went back to his work, with a faint ray of hope in his breast that he might be of some use after all.

That evening the professional's fears were confirmed. Teddy Banks, the Grayshott goal-keeper, had suddenly and completely disappeared.

All news travels apace, and when Roy arrived home the whole village was buzzing with the intelligence. Mr. Banks, the butcher, had seen his son set off through the woods for a

good brisk walk, in preparation for the morrow. Teddy had promised to be back for tea. This was at four in the afternoon, and was now nearly ten, and the boy had not returned.

Roy learned the news from Madge as he ate his supper. Then he put on his coat and cap and sallied forth to the institute, where the members of the Grayshott eleven usually assembled to play chess and to map out future plans of campaign.

Dick Merivale was there, talking to Welch. Both looked unusually upset. "I hear Banks has disappeared," said Roy, as he approached.

"I've seen something fresh," urged Welch wearily.

"What will you do about it, Merry?" asked Roy, ignoring Welch's remark.

"Do? Hanged if I know! The only thing that I can suggest is to have some sort of a search-party started. We'd do it, if Teddy doesn't turn out to-morrow."

All Merivale's cheery optimism seemed to have given away at this return of affairs. He was almost distracted.

Roy suddenly gave a violent start.

"What are you thinking of?" asked Welch.

"It had suddenly occurred to Roy, in view of what Sammy Steer had told him that afternoon, that Teddy Banks might have been the victim of foul play on the part of Whyman and his satellites. If that were the case, it was quite on the cards that the goal-keeper had been kidnapped and hidden in the hut which had already been the scene of an encounter with the Leighs."

Roy overcame a strong temptation to say nothing of his suspicions. If Banks's whereabouts were discovered, he would have no chance of filling the vacant place. It would pay him to remain silent.

But Roy Phillips had learned the lesson of his own mistakes. He was up to him to do the decent thing—and he did it.

"I say, you chaps," he said, his voice trembling with excitement. "I've an idea that Teddy Banks had been kidnapped. It sounds far-fetched, I know, but I've got jolly good grounds for believing what I say."

And he recounted to his companions the treacherous designs of Whyman and his satellites.

"We'll go there at once!" said Merivale, when Roy had finished.

"May be something in it."

The trio left the institute and struck out through the woods. Twenty minutes' hard walking brought them to the hut, and as they entered the door, they felt a flash of his electric torch.

"The place was empty," said Merivale. "We've drawn blanks. I can't think what's happened to old Teddy."

"Do you want a substitute for Banks?" asked Roy, determined to brush the subject without delay.

"Yes," said Dick Merivale desperately. "You can suggest anyone."

"Myself," was Roy's reply.

The Grayshott skipper gripped the speaker by the arm.

"I don't want to be funny," he said, "I choose another time and place! I'm not in the humour for jokes just now. Merry, what do you say?"

"I'd put up all I knew," said Roy simply.

Merivale stopped short.

"It means that," he asked seriously.

"Every bit."

It was with no certainty in Roy's tone which Dick was quick to observe. After all, he reflected, Roy would be as good as any other substitute, since he had not been known to give up. Banks was not forthcoming. Then, again, this was his brother, good old Jimmy Phillips, who was now putting up with the barbarous Hans, had asked him to give Roy a helping hand.

And here was a fitting opportunity. Merivale's mind was made up.

"I'll play you," he said shortly.

The 5th Chapter. The Dark Horse. "Go up, there!"

"Let me go to Leigh!"

"Play it, Grayshott!"

The great march for the County Cup had commenced. Nelson had been attracted to the Lehigh's ground. The stands were packed, the air was filled with shouting and cheering.

Not that the audience expected a close game. Leigh were far too powerful a team for anyone to suppose they would lose, or even draw. But curiosity was rife as to what sort of a name plucky little Grayshott would put up against their formidable side.

"The best thing we can do," said Jimmy Welch, after Merivale had taken a long-sight at the field and laid back and defend on goal, otherwise we shall look ghastly fools. They'll simply overrun us. Hallo! There's that old Whyman lining up! Shall I ask him what he knows about Teddy's disappearance?"

"I'll bet you're right," Dick gloomily.

"It's too late now, anyway."

"Hats," was Welch's rejoinder. "Barker, too. Say, but the word, and I'll be back in five minutes."

Before Dick could reply to this dismal threat, the whistle had sounded, and a wild sea of flags and mud was then that the crowd gave full vent to their enthusiasm.

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half-time, and the score-sheet was blank.

"A lomon!" gasped Welch, snapping up to the referee, who was supplied with that acceptable fruit, Jimmy Kingston for a lomon. I always find it goes more quickly down my gullet when I've sucked one of these things."

"I've done previous little shooting so far," he said. "In fact, if it were not for young Phillips, I reckon I could have got more than a goal."

"True, O King," mumbled Welch, making a very face. "Where is the young fellow? I would find congratulate him."

But Roy Phillips had no eyes for what was then. He was leaning over the railings, holding a council of war with Sammy Steer.

"You've performed splendidly," said that worthy. "Keep it up, my son, and you'll take 'em all by storm. And you, it's no good blinking at me. You think Leigh's half-backs will get you? They're half. They're above your weight. But a game's not lost till it's won, and a game's not won till the battle is over. I once heard Steve Bloomer remark—"

"I love you a dolt which I'm sure is said to many a dolt to repay," said Roy, with feeling.

"Oh, cut it short!" said the professional impatiently. "One good turn deserves another. Look out. They're lining up again!"

Roy sprang off to the opposite side of the field, to dole out forty-five minutes more. All his nervousness had left him now, and he was fresh and alert.

The Grayshott forwards were a plucky pair, but beyond that little could be said in their favour. Their method of attack was to be congratulated, and as a result Roy was kept busy.

All sorts and conditions of shots were sent in upon him from every angle. But he was never at a fault. Ever resourceful, he fielded away several severing shots, and cleverly kicked many a dangerous drive.

The crowd, quick to appreciate good play, cheered him to the echo.

"You've done grandly!" gasped Jimmy Welch. "In the words of Shakespeare, he doth baffle the narrow world like a Colossus. Great things are done in you, and never a fault. Ever resourceful, he fielded away several severing shots, and cleverly kicked many a dangerous drive."

"I thought so, too," admitted Merivale. "We live and learn, you know."

Good deal of middle-play hereabouts relieved the pressure, and Roy enjoyed a well-earned rest. Time was passing, and the Grayshott were beginning to grow restive.

The goalless draw is always an abominable thing to the crowd, and the Grayshott were beginning to grow restive.

Whyman gnashed his teeth.

"No good dividing the points," he muttered to Wake. "We've got to win or lose."

"By fair means or foul!" agreed the amiable Wake.

"The Lehigh forwards had been a rather feeble combination hitherto. The wingers were mere boys, and they well knew that if Leigh's forwards might be put out of action for some time to come. So, while not openly fawning, they all went about their work with caution.

Presently, however, Lane, who was as wide as a door, was hailed from the Grayshott Paraphrase School, sent across a ripping centre. Dick Merivale raved up to meet it, and the Lehigh's full-back fairly and squarely with his right foot, sent it hurtling into the far corner of the net.

"Goal!"

The crowd, who loved an uphill fight, were rendered almost frenzied when Dick scored a hat-trick, and were hurled in the air, at the risk of returning to their rightful owners, the Lehigh's full-back, who was practically unknown, had suddenly sprung into prominence.

Whyman and his crew were looking black in the quarter of an hour remained for play, and they were a goal to the bad. It was neck or nothing to them.

Sammy Steer, who had sauntered round to the other end of the field, came back with a sparkling eye. Grayshott were not out of the wood yet, and all Roy's ability and smartness were called into play now.

Whyman shouted fiercely to his forwards as the game was set in motion again. The Leigh fellows kicked the ball into the goal, and Roy's goal, and he found himself working as hard as ever. Once the ball, man slipper by mouth, was in the net, Dick stepped back and the grasp, and the spectators held their breath for a brief second. But Roy recovered, and punted the leather well up the field.

Towards the close of that memorable game the Leigh forwards stalked everything on a far-awl rush up the field, and got more than a goal. The defence was founded, as it were, upon a rock.

"Go back!" gasped Jimmy Welch. "He's unaccountable. Great, you great!"

Whyman, reckless now, came up with two forwards and assisted in the bombardment of Grayshott's stand. On one occasion he was presented with a fine opportunity. He lost his head, and ballooned the ball high over the crossbar and on to the roof of the stand.

"Two minutes more!" panted Merivale. "If only young Phillips can keep 'em out, the game's ours. I'm done. Wake cricked me just now, the end!"

As the ball was being returned to the field of play, an excited and excited crowd gathered on the top over the railings and roared upon the ground. A minor war went on from all sides, and the Lehigh's were victorious.

"Stand back, Teddy!" cried Merivale quickly. "It's all O. K., old man."

"You're leading!" exclaimed Banks incredulously.

Dick nodded, and the butcher's son stepped forward and assisted in witness the conclusion of that grim conflict.

Leigh's ball was shot. Some devious kicking accompanied by violent torrents of abuse from the baffled Whyman, and the game was over. The referee called the winners, their headstrong rivals, by a goal to nil!

"My hat!" exclaimed Teddy Banks, as the victorious players, amid the ringing cheers of the crowd, streamed into the dressing-room.

"Don't ask me. It was young Phillips. He's a giddy Troop."

"He's a little more than that, I fancy. I say, Teddy, where have you been?"

"For a night and the letter part of a week, said Banks. "I have been imprisoned in a sort of hut by the side of the railway. Sounds amazing, I know. It's a regular job, and very seriously."

"But we searched the hut," stammered Merivale. "Phillips here had an idea, you'd be captured and taken."

"Did you look in the left?" grinned Banks.

"Well, that's where Whyman & Co. planted me. They lay in wait for me, and I was captured and taken. Half an hour ago workman came in and for me, and I sprang out of the window."

"The wiper did," said Welch indignantly, referring to Whyman, who had been careful to look like a wiper. "It ought to be shown up."

"He did!" broke in the voice of Sammy Steer, who had entered the dressing-room at that moment. "But all's well that ends well. Buck up and get washed, my son, for the earth's war is over. It's the end of the Cup!"

A few minutes later, amid a perfect hurricane of applause, Dick Merivale, captain of Grayshott, received the magnificent trophy at the hands of the great man.

"Well, that sportsman, Merivale," said the earl warmly, "and so that young goalie of yours. It gives me considerable pleasure to present you with the trophy, with my sincerest wishes for the future of Grayshott football."

"All for Dick the day's gladness grew riotous."

When Roy Phillips arrived home that evening he found his sister Madge busily engaged in compiling a letter. She looked up at him with a bright smile as he presented it.

"Well played, Roy," she exclaimed. "You were ripping!"

"Yes, that's what I was. Who's been chattering my praises now? And how do you know whether I played a decent game or not?"

"You did all right," said Madge, smiling. "I've just got home in the Squire's trap. And now I'm writing you a long letter, and I'll tell you, and how splendidly you've bucked up."

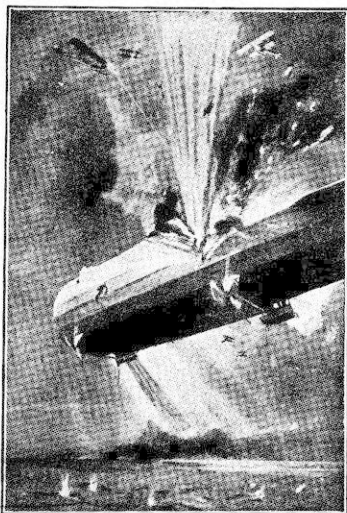
Roy placed his arm affectionately on his sister's shoulder and laughed.

"You're a game, Madge!" he said. "And—ah! I've done with blocking me out of my own game, and I'm a bit more of a sportsman."

And his latest triumph headed the list of his bringing glory to the boys' Phillips Grayshott's dark horse.

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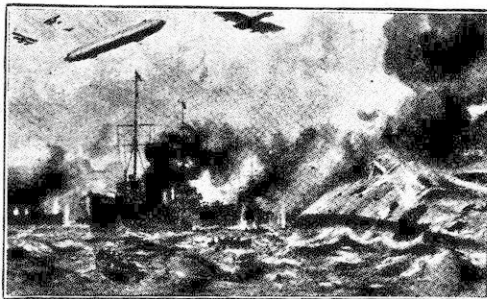
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