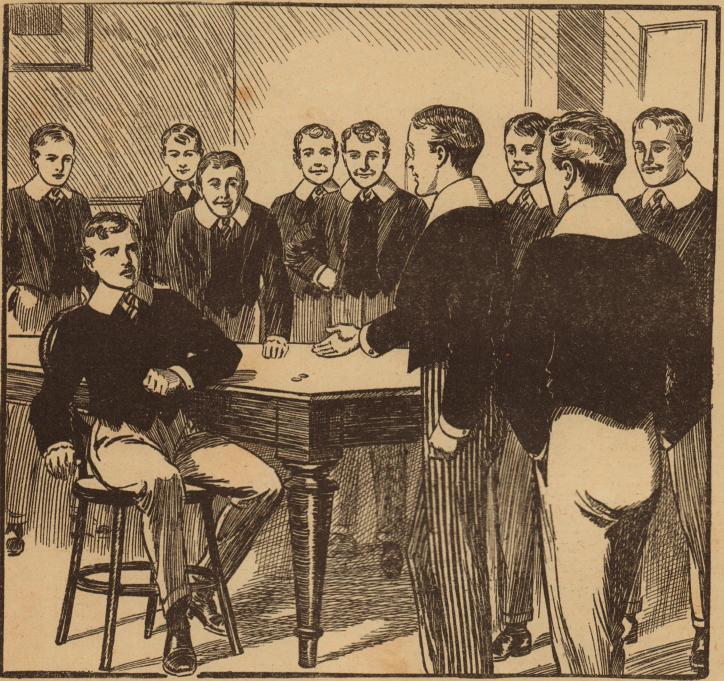
# EVERY BOY'S BEST BOOK IS-

# MOTTO IS: PLAY THE GAME!"

No. 771. Vol. XV. New Series. 7

ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending March 18th, 1916,



"By our combined efforts we have raised a fund for presentation to our friend Rawson, in acknowledgment of the honour he has done us by comin' to reside in our midst," said Adolphus Smythe, placing two coins on the table. "In the name of Rawson's friends, I hereby make the presentation."

# SCHOLARSHIP BOY'S

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story, dealing with the Adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood School.

> By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter. Hard Up!

"Keep smiling!"

Jimmy Silver of the Fourth clapped
Rawson on the back, with a sounding
clap that made Rawson stagger, as he
gave him that useful admonition.

Rawson gasped.

"Ow!"

Jimmy grinned at him cheerfully. "What are you looking like a boiled owl about?" he asked.

"Was I?"

"You were! Come up to the study to tea," said Jimmy. He held up a parcel, which he had just brought from the tuckshop, temptingly. "Look here! We're in funds—at least, I'm in funds, and the study is flowing with milk and honey—anyway, with ham and eggs! Come on!" Rawson grinned faintly.

"Thanks! But—"

"No, buts," said Jimmy Silver; "you're coming."

And he grasped Rawson's sleeve with his free hand, and marched him along the passage.

Rawson went unresistingly.
It was difficult to resist Jimmy Silver's high spirits. Jimmy's spirits were always high, his face always sunny. He swung his parcel of tuck cheerly by the string as the two juniors went up the passage to the end study.

Rawson's face was dark and clouded and Jimmy wondered why.

Rawson, the scholarship boy, had had a good many little persecutions to suffer at the hands of Townsend & Co., the snobs of the Fourth; but they had not affected his spirits much. The burly Rawson was a little too muscular for the "nuts" to handle personally—and he repaid their abunch more profound and well-founded, despising them as snobs and slackers, and duffers, as they were. He was generally in cheerful spirits.

But Jimmy Silver had spotted him looking as if most of the troubles in the universe had settled on him in a cloud.

looking as if most of the troubles in the universe had settled on him in a cloud.

So it was just like Jimmy to march him off to a merry feed in the end study, with the intention of cheering him out of the "blues."

Townsend and Topham and Peele, the nuts of the Fourth, were in the passage, and they made it a point to curl their lips as Jimmy Silver came by with Rawson. Rawson did not even look at them. But Jimmy Silver did. And he swung his parcel a little more widely, and caught Townsend under the chim with it as he passed. Towny gave a yell and sat down.

"Clumsy!" said Jimmy Silver chidingly.

And he walked on to the end study, leaving Townsend sitting in the passage, rubbing his chin and glaring.

"Cheeky rotter!" gasped Townsend. "If—if I thought he did that on purpose, I'd go after him and lick him!"

"He did it on purpose, rightenough," said Topham.

"No doubt about that," chimed in Peele.

Townsend considered it judicious to turn a deaf ear to those remarks.

"No doubt about that," chimed in Peele.

Townsend considered it judicious to turn a deaf ear to those remarks. Certainly he would have fared very badly if he had gone after Jimmy Silver to lick him.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were in the end study, getting tea. They greeted Rawson with friendly nods. The Fistical Four of the Fourth rather liked old Rawson. Ho was so burly and good-natured, slow to take offence, but a dreadfully hard hitter when he did take offence, as some of the nuts had discovered, and a decent fellow could hardly help liking him. And then, there was no "rot" about him. He made no attempt to conceal the fact that his father was a working carpenter, and his brother a private in the Army—amazing as it seemed to Towny & Co., he was distinctly proud of both these facts.

Townsend, in a moment of deep savesme had asked Payson if he

he was distinctly proud of both these facts.

Townsend, in a moment of deep sarcasm, had asked Rawson if he would have been proud if his sisters had been washerwomen; to which Rawson had replied in his serious, thoughtful way, that it depended upon whether they did the washing well. Rawson's amazing opinion was that a good carpenter was superior to a bad emperor; an opinion which proved to Towny & Co. that he was simply "outside"—in fact, the very extreme outside edge.

Rawson's plain common-sense, which outraged all the ideas of beliefs of the elegant nuts of Rookwood, rather amused Jimmy Silver & Co. It was really surprising the number of things Rawson was proud of. He was proud of having come to Rookwood on a scholarship, instead of being paid for by money he hadn't earned. So he wasn't likely to agree in any way with Towny, who regarded earning money as the very last degradation a fellow could fall into.

Jimmy Silver slammed his parcel on the table—the study table that stood as firm as a rock now, since Rawson, with his wonderful knowledge of carpentry, had mended the "gammy" leg.

"Here you are!" said Jimmy. "A

carpentry, had mended the galling leg,
"Here you are!" said Jimmy. "A feast of the gods, dear boys. Have you got the kettle boiling?"
"Just on," said Lovell.
"Make the tea, Rawson, old chap—make yourself useful!" said Jimmy Silver briskly, as he unfastened the parcel.
Rawson nodded without speaking, and made the tea—in his careful way. Everything that Rawson did was careful and methodical, and he made tea as carefully as he did Greek exercises. tea as carefully as he did Greek exercises.

It was indeed a feast of the gods in

(Continued on the next page.)



the end study. There were eggs and ham galore, there were sardines, there was a whole cake, there were two kinds of jam, and there was an entire pineapple. No wonder the Fistical Four sat down very smilingly to tea. It was, in fact, more than a feast of the gods; for as Jimmy Silver truly remarked, the gods on old Olympus never had ham and eggs.

But even under the influence of that cheery feed, Rawson's gloomy face did not light up.

But even under the influence of that cheery feed, Rawson's gloomy face did not light up.

Jimmy tried him on cricket, which would soon be coming along, and in which he intended Rawson to take a hand—let the nuts rage as they would. Rawson was generally keen on games, but just now he seemed to have lost his interest in both footer and cricket. Jimmy came to the point at last—taking a pal's privilege of speaking plainly.

ing plainly. "What's the matter?" he de-

"What's the matter?" he demanded.
"Matter!" said Rawson.
"Yes. You're in the blues."
Rawson coloured.
"I—I'm sorry!" he stammered.
"I—I shouldn't have come."
"Bless your little heart, we don't mind!" said Lovell. "Pass the jam!"

"Hess your little flear, we don't mind!" said Lovell. "Pass the jam!"

"Anything wrong?" asked Raby.
"You can tell us. Has Smythe of the Shell been licking you again?"

Rawson grinned. The way Adolphus Smythe had tackled him, to mop up Rookwood with him, and the way the great Adolphus had fled headlong from the ring after a few rounds, was still chuckled over in the school.

"No," said Rawson.
"Have the noble nuts been worrying?" asked Jimmy.
"They don't worry me," said Rawson. "I don't mind them."

"Then cheer up!" said Newcome.
"Try the pineapple, and grin."
Rawson tried the pineapple, but he did not grin.
"The—the fact is—" he said, at last, his face flushing crimson.
"Go it!" said Jimmy Silver encouragingly.
"I—I'm short of tin."

"I—I'm short of tin."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
Rawson looked puzzled.
"Nothing funny in that, is there?"

Rawson looked puzzled.

"Nothing funny in that, is there?" he asked.

"Well, no; but it's rather funny to wear a face like a blue moon about it," said Jimmy Silver, laughing.

"My dear chap, that isn't so bad as the end of the world, or a German invasion, or Lord Haldane getting into the Government, or any catastrophe like that. Cheer up, and borrow some tin from your Uncle James. How much do you want?"

"That ain't all," said Rawson. "You—you see, I don't have a lot of pocket-money like you chaps. I only have the scholarship allowance, and out of that I have to pay for my books and clothes, and—and there's other things."

"Old folks at home—I understand," said Jimmy. "It's ripping of you, old chap. Nothing to blush about."

"What I mean is," said Rawson, still blushing, "I—I mean, if you lend me some tin, it will be a bit of a time before I can shell out again, and—and so—"

"Make it next term, if you like,"

'Make it next term, if you like,"
d Jimmy. "Will half-a-quid see

make the text with a you have, said Jimmy. "Will half-a-quid see you through?"

"It would for this week," said Rawson, "but—but I mayn't be able to pay it back for weeks, or I'd have asked you before."

"Doy't worry about that." said

asked you before."

"Don't worry about that," said Jimmy. He fumbled in his pockets, and produced three half-crowns, two shillings, and a sixpence. "There you are, my son. If you keep it till next term, it will be a little windfall for me some time when I'm stony."

Rawson hesitated to pick up the money, though his eyes dwelt on it longingly. It was evident to the Fistical Four that the scholarship junior was bitterly in need of it, though why they could not guess. Rawson certainly never had much money, but he had no expensive tastes; and, as a rule, though he had little, he generally had some in his pockets, and never fell into the utterly "stony" state that Jimmy Silver & Co experienced so often.

"Shove it into your pocket, old

son," said Jimmy, in wonder.
"What's the matter with you?"
"It—it's rather like sponging on you!" faltered Rawson.
"What rot!"

"It—it's latery you!" faltered Rawson.
"What rot!"
"But—but you fellows know I'm not that sort, don't you?" said Rawson. "It's so pressing that—that I'm risking making you think badly of me—"
"Don't be so jolly serious about nothing," said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "You are such a serious old hunks, Rawson!"

unks, Rawson!"
Rawson slipped the money into his pocket.
"I can't say how much I'm obliged to you, Silver," he said. "Do you mind if I buzz off now? I—I want to get down to Coombe before the

to get down to Coombe Belowshops close."
"Right-ho!" said Jimmy.
Rawson quitted the study. The Fistical Four had not finished their tea, and they went on with it cheerfully enough. In discussing the prospects of the coming cricket season, they soon forgot about Rawson. But they were to be reminded soon of the scholarship junior—and of the loan.

# The 2nd Chapter. Disgusted With Rawson.

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Disgusted With Rawson.

"A regular blow-out!" said Muffin of the Fourth.

"Oh, bow-wow!" drawled Townsend. "Draw it mild, Muffin!"

"I tell you I saw him."

"Well, where did the bounder get the tin?"

"Blessed if I know, unless he's been borrowing it from Leggett," said Muffin. "But there he was, in Mrs. Wicks' shep in Coombe, laying in tuck ad lib. And when a fellow asked for a whack, he said 'Rats!' Rats—to me, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Serve you right for wanting to feed such a rank outsider, by gad!" said Townsend.

"Well, I haven't been down on Rawson," said Muffin. "I've treated him very decently, I think—spoken to him, and berrowed his dictionary, and all that."

"You'd be civil to anybody with a smell of a doughnut about him," said Topham."

And there was a laugh. Muffin was a fat youth with a first-class appetite, and it was popularly believed that he would have accepted an invitation to feed with the Kaiser himself. Muffin was in a state of indignation now, and Jimmy Silver & Co., who were coming in from the dusky quadrangle, paused to listen to his tale of woe and grievance.

"Somebody done you out of a doughnut, Muffy?" asked Jimmy sympathetically. "Or did you dream you were a jam-puff—and woke up?"

"It's that rotter Rawson," said Muffin. "Mean, I call it. Rolling in tuck, and wouldn't hand out a sirede his count.

woke up?"

"It's that rotter Rawson," said
Muffin. "Mean, I call it. Rolling
in tuck, and wouldn't hand out a
single biscuit to a chap."

"Tosh!" said Jimmy at once.
"Rawson always whacks out, when
he's got anything."

"Which isn't often!" sneered
Townsend

he's got anything."
"Which isn't often!" sneered
Townsend.
"Well, I tell you he's a mean
beast," said the aggrieved Muffin.
"Rolling in cash, too!"
"He isn't—he's stony!"
"I tell you he was simply perspiring bobs," said Muffin. "I saw
him. I called in at Mrs. Wicks' to
ask her to trust me for a stone
ginger, and—and she wouldn't. And
there was the bounder buying tuck.
Cakes, and biscuits, and chocolate,
and things, and whole jars of jam, I
tell you. And he wouldn't whack
out a single crumb with a chap he
knew."
"What rot!" said Jimmy.
"And that wasn't all, either," said
Muffin. "He was buying smokes,
too."
"Pate!"

"I tell you I saw 'em!" howled Muffin. "He asked Mrs. Wicks to give him an old cardboard box to pack 'em in—all kinds of tuck, and a packet of tobacco, and half a dozen packets of ciragettes. I saw the lot."

Jimmy Silver's brow darkened.

If Townsend or Topham had made
that statement, Jimmy Silver would
have regarded it as a libel, and

perhaps taken drastic measures. But Muffin, who never thought about anything but feeding, was not one of Rawson's persecutors. And he was evidently in aggrieved earnest. Townsend burst into a mocking chuckle.

"Well, that puts the lid on!" he ejaculated. "Why, Rawson's rowed Toppy and me for smoking in the study."

study."

"He has!" said Topham. "The cheeky worm!"

"And now it comes out that he smokes himself," said Townsend.

"Like all these chaps who keep up awfully good appearances, what! I suppose he's going to smoke 'em in the end study with Jimmy Silver."

"You don't suppose anything of the kind," said Jimmy curtly. "Anybody who starts smoking in the end study will go out of that study on his neck. And I don't believe Rawson smokes. He's told me he doesn't."

"Of course, he would tell the truth!" increal in the said to the study."

Rawson smokes. He's told me he doesn't."

"Of course, he would tell the truth!" jeered Peele.

"Of course he would," agreed Jimmy. "Only cads tell lies, and Rawson is a decent chap. You've made a mistake, Muffin!"

"Didn't I see with my own eyes?" howled Muffin indignantly.

"Oh, you were dazzled by the pots of jam, and saw double!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps he's going to stand a study feed, and there may be a chance for you yet, Muffin," suggested Dick Oswald.

Muffin brightened up.

"Yes, that's possible. I'll keep an eye open for him when he comes in. After all, it's time he stood a spread; he hasn't stood one since he's been here."

"Too jolly poor!" said Peele.

he hasn't stood one since.

"Too jolly poor!" said Peele.

"Well, he's in funds now," said
Muffin. "He was spending shillings
like ha'pennies, I tell you!"

"Anybody missed any cash?"
chortled Smythe of the Shell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's not going to stand a feed
in my study," said Townsend. "If
he does, I shall retire from the
scene!"

"Do!" said Muffin. "That will leave all the more for me. I sha'n't refuse Rawson's invitation. I rather like old Rawson, come to think of it, though he was rather a beast at Mrs. Wicks'."

"Sure, and he's a broth of a boy!" said Flynn. "And if Towny don't like the feed in his study, Rawson can have it in mine, and I'll help

him."

"Same here," said Hooker.

"More likely the chap's having a feed on his own, and don't mean to ask anybody!" sneered Townsend.

"Rats to you!" sneered Flynn.
"Let's go down to the gates and wait for him, and give him a hand with the tuck."

"Jolly good idea!" said Muffin heartily.

"Jolly good idea!" said Muffin heartily.

Half a dozen of the Classical Fourth adopted Flynn's suggestion. The nuts contented themselves with sneering. They didn't want a "whack" in Rawson's spread; especially as it was doubtful whether they would be asked.

The Fistical Four went on into the common-room; Jimmy Silver's brows knitted a little.

Jimmy with his usual generosity, had lent Rawson nearly all that remained out of his remittance, and he was himself in a "stony" state till the funds should rise again.

It was decidedly startling to hear that Rawson had been expending that loan in "tuck." Jimmy had naturally imagined that he needed it for some important purpose. If Rawson had borrowed money for a feed, when, according to his own statement, the date of the repayment was very uncertain, Rawson was not exactly the fellow Jimmy Silver had taken him for.

"That's jolly queer!" Lovell remarked.

"Simple enough," said Raby, in a thoughtful way.

"The poor chap has been chipped about not having any money, and so on, and perhaps he thinks he'd like to stand Sam for once."

once."

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"It's not quite like Rawson," he said. "But I dare say that's it. He never seemed to care for Towny & Co.'s silly rot; but you never know. And it's all bosh about the smokes. Muffin was mistaken."

"I—I suppose so."

"Dash it all! We're not going to believe that Rawson has been telling downright lies!" said Jimmy.

"N-no! But Muffin says he saw

"Muffin's a fat idiot!"
"True, O King!"
Meanwhile, eight or nine juniors had gathered at the gate to wait for Tom Rawson to come in. The Classical Fourth agreed that it was really

a ripping idea of Rawson's to stand a "spread," as an answer to the charges of meanness hinted by Towny & Co. And they were generously willing to help old Rawson in disposing of the good things.

One Penny

Rawson in disposing of the good things.
Rawson's burly figure came in sight, striding up the road from Coombe.

"He hasn't got a bundle!" said Oswald.

"Can't have much tuck in his pockets," said Flynn. "Sure it's a duffer ye are, Muffin. It isn't a spread at all, at all!"

"But he was buying the tuck—tons of it!"

"Then sure he's scoffed it intoirely. Besides, why should he go down to Coombe to buy the tuck for a spread? He could have got it from Sergeant Kettle here."

"But I saw him."

Rawson arrived at the gates. He glanced in some surprise at the group of juniors, all of whom greeted him with cordial nods and sweet smiles.

"Top of the afternoon to yez!" said Flynn. "Where have you got it?"

"Eh? Got what?"

"Top of the afternoon to yes!" said Flynn. "Where have you got it?"

"Eh? Got what?"

"Faith, the tuck!"

"What tuck?"

"Isn't it a spread?" demanded Hooker warmly.

"A spread! No."

"Well, of all the mean beasts!" said Muffin, in disgust. "Of course I took it for granted that you were going to stand a spread with all that tuck, Rawson!"
Rawson grinned.

"You shouldn't take things for granted, Tubby!"
And Rawson went on into the quadrangle with his long strides.

The Classical juniors looked after him with deep feelings.

"Scoffed it all himself!" gasped Muffin. "I tell you there was a heap—whole jars of jam, cakes, and biscuits, and chocolate!"

"Greedy rotter!" growled Hooker.
"Blessed if I don't think Towny's been right about that chap all the time!"

"And cheese," said Muffin. "A really beautiful cut of cheese. And

"And cheese," said Muffin. "A really beautiful cut of cheese. And a glass-jar of ham and tongue."
"Well, he must have a blow-out!" grinned Flynn. "Sure, I hope he enjoyed it; but it's a mean baste he is!"

enjoyed it; but it's a mean baste he is!"

And the juniors returned to the School House in a state of great disgust. Towny & Co. chuckled glee-fully when they heard the result. A fellow who, the first time he was in funds, went out of the school and stood himself a "whacking" feed, all on his own, was not likely to be popular. And the story of the smokes was not likely to be allowed to die. Rawson had-stopped smoking in his study by Towny and Toppy, who shared the study with him—a high-handed proceeding that had earned him the deadliest animosity of the "Giddy Goats." The discovery that he was a smoker himself was too good to be lost, and Townsend & Co. made the very most of it.

#### The 3rd Chapter. Shown In!

Jimmy Silver looked rather oddly t Rawson when he saw him again the Fourth-Form dormitory that

in the Fourth-Form dormitory that night.

The feed that hadn't come off had been much discussed among the juniors, and it was generally agreed that Rawson was what Muffin elegantly termed a "greedy beast."

Raby's charitable surmise that Rawson had borrowed the money in order to rebut charges of meanness by "standing Sam" in the Fourth was evidently wide of the mark.

The Fourth, of course, did not know that Rawson had borrowed the money Muffin had seen him expending at the village shop. Jimmy Silver & Co. were not likely to mention that circumstance.

Silver & Co. were not likely to mention that circumstance.

Rawson caught Jimmy's eye on him in the dormitory, and coloured, and turned away his head. He had heard a good deal of the tattle among the juniors, and understood how he was regarded.

The next morning he joined Jimmy as the captain of the Fourth went out into the quad before breakfast.

Rawson's manner was very awk-

out into the quad before breakfast.
Rawson's manner was very awkward, and there was a flush in his cheeks. It was evidently painful to him to say what he had to say.

"I—I say, Silver—" he began.

"Hallo!" said Jimmy cordially.

"More trouble?"

"No. You—you've heard what the fellows are babbling—"

"Bless you, I never mind what fellows babble!" said Jimmy. "I advise you not to, either. That's sound advice from your Uncle James."

Rawson grinned.

Rawson grinned

"I shouldn't like you to think I'd borrowed your money to go out and guzzle," he said awkwardly. "I want you to know that it wasn't so." "That's all right," said Jimmy. "Muffin had eaten too many porkpies, and he dreamed it all." "Not that, either, exactly," said Rawson. "I don't deny anything that Muffin said, and all I say is, it wasn't his business!" "Quite so!" Jimmy became grave. "Look here, Rawson, I hope Muffin was mistaken about the smokes!" "You don't think I smoke in secret, like that fathead Townsend, do you?" said Rawson, laughing. "No; and I'll take your word about it." "I shouldn't like you to think I'd

"No; and I'll take your word about it."

"Well, I give you my word I don't!" said Rawson. "I hope I'm not silly idiot enough. Whatever I may be, I don't think you'll ever see me setting up as a nut."

"All serene!"

"Look here! If you like, Silver, I'll explain the whole thing to you," said Rawson slowly and reluctantly. "But you'd rather not."

"Yes, I'd rather not. But as you lent me the money—"

"Bow-wow! Don't say another word! Come and help me punt this footer about!"

And the subject was dismissed. Townsend and Topham kept an eye on Rawson that day, with the idea of catching him smoking, to show him up as a humbug—a whited sepulchre, as Towny put it. But Rawson was not to be caught. If he smoked, it was a dead secret, for he was never seen with a cigarette, neither was there a tell-tale stain on his fingers, or a "niff" of tobacco about him. For two or three days it was the same.

"He smokes out of doors, same

For two or three days it was the same.

"He smokes out of doors, same as he has his spreads," said Townsend to his chums. "Did you ever hear of such a cad? Going out of the school to guzzle, as if he was afraid a chap would ask for a whack! Br-r-r!"

Peele chuckled.

"Rather a good idea to follow him next time he goes on a gorging expedition," he remarked. "Catch him in the act—what!"

"Good egg!" agreed Townsend "But where does he get the tin from? I believe he only has about a bob a week allowance."

"Nobody's missed anything," grinned Topham.

"Might be borrowing from that Modern cad, Leggett," said Peele.
"Pity him if he gets into Leggett's clutches!"

Rawson came into the study at the disagrate.

Rawson came into the study at that moment, and the discussion ceased. Rawson was looking very thoughtful and decidedly glum. He glanced at the three nuts. They had cigarettes between their lips, and there was a haze of smoke in the study.

Towny & Co. watched him un-easily, wondering whether he would out up rusty, as usual, at the smoke. But Rawson had other matters in

But Rawson had other matters in his mind.

He opened the table-drawer and took out a book. It was a somewhat gaudy volume, and evidently a "prize" which Rawson had won at school before he came to Rookwood. He put the book under his arm, and left the study without a word to the nuts. Townsend, glancing from the window, saw the scholarship junior crossing over to the Modern side.

side.
Tommy Dodd & Co. were lounging outside Mr. Mander's house, and they lined up to meet Rawson. Rawson was a Classical, and the three Tommies were Moderns, which was a quite sufficient reason for ragging Rawson. The fact that they rather liked him personally made no difference. rather liked him personally made no difference. "Stand and deliver!" said Tommy

Rawson stopped.
"Pax!" he said. "I've come to

"Pax!" he said. "I've come to see Leggett."
"No Classical bounders allowed on this side!" said Tommy Cook. "Not unless they go on their knees—"
"And sit up and beg!" said Tommy Doyle Dovle

Doyle.

Rawson grinned.
"Don't play the goat now!" he said. "I've got business with Leggett!"

Tommy Dodd glanced round, to make sure that Mr. Manders was not within sight or hearing.
"Going to see Leggett?" he asked.
"Yes."

"Yes."
"All right! We'll take you to

him."
The three Tommies separated, to The three Tommies separated, to allow Rawson to pass in. As he put his foot on the stairs they closed on him suddenly, and he was whirled off the floor. The surprised Classical struggled in their grasp.

"Let go, you silly asses!" ha

gasped. "Let go, I tell you! Ow-

ome on!" said Tommy Dodd

cheerily.

The three Moderns rushed Rawson up the staircase, with his arms and legs wildly flying. He was rushed headlong into the juniors' passage, and they arrived at Leggett's door.

"You silly duffers!" gasped Rawson.

Rawson.
"Knock at the door!" said Tommy Dodd.

Orack!

"Yaroooh!" yelled Rawson.

The merry Moderns had used Rawson's head to knock at the door with.

Come in!" called out Leggett.

"Yooooop!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
Leggett opened the door from within. He jumped at the sight of Rawson struggling and wriggling helplessly in the grasp of the three

Tommies. "Visitor for you," gasped Tommy Dodd

Dodd.
"Sure, we're showing him in, Leggett."
"Come on, Rawson."
Leggett jumped back as Rawson was rushed into the study. But he did not jump quickly enough. Rawson's head crashed on his chest, and Leggett roared and fell on the carpet. Rawson was deposited on his chest, and the three Tommies retired from the study, howling with laughter. from the laughter.

#### The 4th Chapter. The Amateur Shylock.

The Amateur Shylock.

"Yow-ow-ow! Gerroff!" gasped Leggett.
Rawson, breathless after his rough handling, rolled off Leggett, and the Modern junior sat up, gasping.

"You silly Classical ass!"

"It wasn't my fault," said Rawson.

"Those duffers—"

"You silly fathead, what did you come here for?" hooted Leggett, staggering to his feet. "I'm hurt."

"Sorry, but—"

"Oh, get out, you Classical rotter!"

Pawson put his coller straight. He

Rawson put his collar straight. He picked up the book, which had rolled into the fender.

"What the dickens is that?" said Leggett, looking at it.

"I've come on business," said

Leggett, looking at it.

"I've come on business," said Rawson.

Leggett calmed down, a gleam coming into his narrow, shifty eyes. Leggett of the Fourth was always open to do business. He-would buy anything for a tenth part its value, and sell it again for double its value when he found a purchaser, and he was always ready to lend money at fifty per cent per week. There was no doubt that Leggett would be a great financier when he grew up, unless he found his financial operations cut short by a cold and unsympathetic judge and jury some day.

"Oh, that's all right!" said Leggett. "Short of tin?"

"Yes."

"You shouldn't waste your tin in spreads," grinned Leggett. "I've heard all about it, you see!"

"You buy things of the fellows," said Rawson, without heeding that remark.

"Yes, if they're any good."

mark.
"Yes, if they're any good."
"What will you give me for this

ook?"
Leggett sniffed.
"Nixes!" he replied.
"It's a pretty good book," said tawson. "Morocco binding, gilt dgcs. and a jolly good story—Treasure Island."
"Books are a drug in the market," and Leggett, with another sniff. What is it—some blessed school Rawson.

said Le

"What is it—some blessed school prize?"
"Yes," said Rawson.
"Let's look at it."
Leggett took the book and examined it. He burst into a scoffing laugh as he read an inscription on the flyleaf:
"'Presented to T. Rawson, Denham Road School.' My hat! Is that the County Council School where you used to go?"
"Yes."

"Yes,"
"Well, you'd have to tear out that flyleaf, and that takes away a lot from the value of the book," said Leggett. "Still, I'll give you two-pence for it."

"Twopence!" ejaculated Rawson.
"I don't suppose I should get a
shilling for it," said Leggett. "Anyway, there's my offer—take it or
leave it."
"I'll leave it, thanks!" said
Rawson, taking the book back.
He moved towards the door, his
face gloomy in expression.
"Hold on!" said Leggett, eyeing
him curiously. "If you're hard up, I
might be able to let you have a loan."

Published very Monday

Leggett paused.

"How much are you in want of?"

"I'd like ten shillings."

"That's a lot of money for a chap like you," said Leggett inquisitively.

"What do you want it for?"

Rawson did not reply.

"Another spread for your little self—what?"

"I mayn't be able to square for weeks," he said.
"I don't care, so long as you keep the interest up."

the interest up."

There was a long pause. Leggett's interest was at the rate of about eight per cent, per week—something like four hundred per cent, per annum. Leggett coulde have given the venerable Shylock himself points in the usury business. But Leggett did not lend money for amusement.

"Well, I—I'll take it!" said Rawson at last. "I must have money from somewhere."

"A poor kid like you shouldn't come to a school like this," said Leggett.

Leggett.
"That's not your business. Where's

"Look here, Leggett," he said awkwardly, "I—I can pay this money at the end of the term. I get a whack from my scholarship—the rest that's due to me. I wouldn't borrow if I couldn't pay."

"Good-bye!" said Leggett. "I don't know what's due to you and what isn't. Bring me the I.O.U. with Jimmy Silver's name on it, and it's a go. Otherwise, don't trouble to call again. I'm rather busy!"

Leggett sat down to the table and began to work. Rawson eyed him for some moments, and then left the study with a downcast face.

The three Tommies were in the doorway, waiting for him. They intended to carry him back to the Classical side, as they had carried him to Leggett's study, but the grim trouble in the junior's face disarmed them. Tommy Dodd clapped him on the back.

"Cheero!" he said.

the back.
"Cheero!" he said.
Rawson started.
"What?"

"Anything up?" asked Tommy Dodd, in wonder, "Been doing business with Leggett? I warn you to give him a miss. He's an out-and-

Rawson nodded, and walked away without replying. Townsend and Topham met him as he came into his own House, and grinned at the sight of his downcast face. Townsend

his paws on me — the cheeky scoundrel. Pretty sort of a ruffian to come to a gentleman's school!"

"Regular hooligan!" said Topham.
"I say. Towny, I've got an idea. What about raising a subscription for Rawson, as he's hard-up?"

"Dotty?" grunted Townsend.
"A spoof subscription, I mean—I've got two farthings—"
"Farthings—"
"Yes—and some gold paint—"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Let's go and tell Smythe, and we'll work it on him this evening," chuckled Topham.
And a little later there was an important consultation, amid much cigarette smoke, in Adolphus Smythe's study, and the loud laughter that proceeded from the study seemed to hint that Adolphus & Co. were enjoying a very good joke indeed.

The 5th Chapter.

#### The 5th Chapter. The Presentation.

There were several curious glances at Rawson when he came into the junior common-room that evening.

The depression in Rawson's face was visible to every eye.

That Rawson was unusually "hard-up" was now known to every fellow in the Fourth; but it was not so clear what he wanted money for.

His wants were few, and his allow-

joke of the form. Rawson's personal affairs were his own business; but Townsend & Co. made them theirs.

Jimmy Silver, who was playing chess with Lovell, gave Rawson a nod as he came in, which Rawson did not even see. He dropped into a chair by the fire, and stared moodily at the embers, unconscious of the looks that were cast towards him. Signs passed between several of the nuts who were in the room. The merry rag planned by Townsend & Co. was in progress.

planned by Townsend & Co. was in progress.

Adolphus Smythe came in, with Howard and Tracy of the Shell. He was joined by Townsend and Topham and Peele. The six elegant nuts came towards Rawson, and there was a general movement of interest. All the juniors in the room could see that something was "on."

"Aw! Excuse me, Rawson," said Smythe, with a little cough.
Rawson looked up moodily.

"Hope I'm not interruptin'," said Smythe politely.

"I'm doing nothing," said Rawson.

"What is it, Smythe? I warn you I don't feel in a humour for any of your little jokes."

Adolphus looked pained.

"Dear man, I'm not jokin'," he said seriously. "I'm goin' to speak to you as a friend."

"Yaas, that's it," said Townsend.

"We're all friends here."

"Don't be ratty about nothin', Rawson," urged Howard; "we're really feelin' very friendly you know."

Rawson looked puzzled.

"Well, what's the game?" he asked.

"Go it, Smythey!"

Rawson looked puzzled.

"Well, what's the game?" he asked.

"Go it, Smythey!"

"It's a presentation," said Smythe.

"A what!"

Jimmy Silver was looking up suspiciously from the chess-board.

Although all the nuts made it a point to look serious and solemn as owls, Jimmy could guess that a joke was intended.

Smythe of the Shell gave another little cough.

"Gentlemen," said Smythe, turning his eyeglass round upon the interested juniors, "I should like you all to see this presentation made to Rawson by his friends."

"Hear, hear!" said the Co.

"Sure, phwat's the little game intoirely?" asked Flynn.

"There is no little game, Flynn. It is a presentation. I hope Rawson will take it in the spirit in which it is meant."

"You can rely on that," said

You can rely on that," said

"You can rely on that," said Rawson.
"Good! Gentlemen, hitherto Rookwood has been a somewhat exclusive school. True, we have Modern bounders here—and even on the Classical side there are such outsiders as Muffin—"Oh, draw it mild!" said Muffin indignantly.

indignantly.

"But until quite lately we were never able to boast here a member of that truly useful and admirable class, the workin'-class," said Adolphus gravely. "This has been altered. We have now a representative of the class which have been called the backbone of England. Don't smile, gentlemen. The Rawsons of this world have a very important function to fulfil. Without Rawsons, how should we get our boots cleaned or our hats made?"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hear, hear!"
"Our attitude, therefore, should be one of grateful recognition towards the lower classes, to whom we owe so much..."

the lower classes, to whom we owe so much——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Off the wicket!" said Rawson calmly. "My idea is that people who work are the upper classes, and people who don't work are the lower classes. They're called by their wrong names at present."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I stand corrected," said Adolphus gracefully. "Our friend Rawson, therefore, comes here as the representative of what should justly be called the upper classes. Unfortunately, in the upper classes. Unfortunately, in the upper class to which he belongs there is a dearth of hard cash, which causes our friend Rawson to be under the painful necessity of wearing old clothes——"

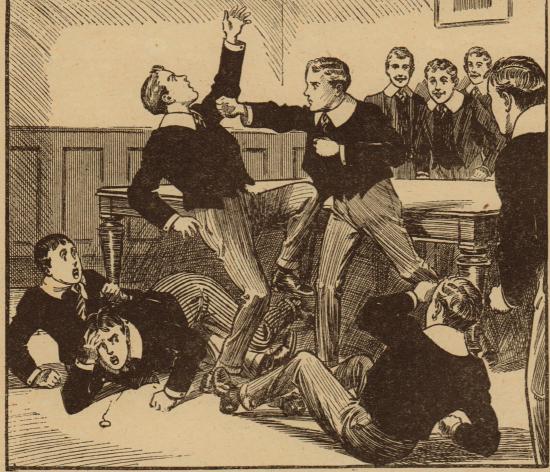
"Shut up, you cad," came from

the painful necessity of wearing old clothes——"

"Shut up, you cad," came from Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, let him run on!" said Rawson. "This is as amusing as watching the monkey at the Zoo."

There was a chirrup of laughter, and Adolphus turned red with wrath. But he calmed himself with an effort, and proceeded in the same strain of gentle irony. "The upper, or Rawson classes, are somewhat short of filthy lucre—our friend Rawson is in that unhappy state known as stony. This is an intolerable state of affairs. Our superior friend, Rawson, has been driven to selling the valuable prizes he won in the palatial halls of the County Council——"



Rawson rushed forward, his face pale with anger, hitting out hard and quick. Topham rolled over, and Townsend and Tracy were sent reeling by a blow on the chin. Peele backed away, but not in time. A drive on the chest laid him on his back.

"Hold on!" said Leggett coolly.
"I don't hand over hard cash for nothing. How do I know you'll pay

nothing. How do I know you a proper your property.

"I promise," said Rawson simply. But Leggett chuckled.

"Promises are like pie-crusts!" he remarked.

"Yours may be," said Rawson contemptuously. "Mine are not. I will pay you the interest every week till I can return the money."

"Promises ain't business," said Leggett coolly. "You may mean to, and you mayn't have the money. You don't have much, I know that. You'll have to hand over some security, of course."

don't have much, I know that. You'll have to hand over some security, of course."

"I—I don't think I've got anything of value, except this book."

"That's of no value. Look here, if you think I'm trusting money into the hands of a poverty-stricken bounder who mayn't be able to pay up, you're mistaken," said Leggett.

"Suppose I give you an I.O.U.?"

"You'll have to do that, of course, but your signature's not worth anything. You've got no resources. If you get a fellow to sign it whom I can trust, it's a go!"

"I couldn't ask——"

"What rot! You're friendly with Jimmy Silver. Ask him."

Rawson flushed.

"I—I couldn't ask him!"

"Then you won't have the tin!" said Leggett coolly. Good-bye!"

Rawson still hesitated,

nked at his chum, and tapped

Rawson on the shoulder.
"Hard up, old chap?" he asked in a very friendly tone.
Rawson stared at him.
"Yes, if you want to know!" he

said.
"Wouldn't Leggett advance tanner on the book?" grin Topham.

Topham.

The nuts had guessed the purport of Rawson's visit to the Modern side.

"No!" said Rawson calmly.

"Well, look here," said Townsend.

"As you're in our study, we feel that we ought to stand by you, Rawson. If you want to raise the wind, we can give you a tip."

Rawson, eved him very dubiously.

Rawson eyed him very dubiously. "If you mean that, I'll be glad," h

said. "Well, write home to your mater "Yes?"

"Yes?"

"And advise her to take in washing. You see—Yarooh!"

Townsend staggered back against the wall as Rawson gave him a rough shove, and the scholarship junior walked on. Townsend, his face red with rage, made a furious stride after him, but paused.

"The cheeky cad!" said Topham.

him, but paused.

"The cheeky cad!" said Topham.
"It was jolly good advice you were giving him, too, Towny."

"I'll be even with him," growled Townsend. "By gad, I'll make the poverty-stricken cad sit up! Laying

ance, small as it was, covered them. He had told Jimmy Silver that there was nothing wrong at home. Tubby ance, small as it was, covered them. He had told Jimmy Silver that there was nothing wrong at home. Tubby Muffin certainly had no doubt what he wanted cash for—it was to stand himself feeds, with smokes galore. But such a want as that was not likely to have such an effect upon a steady character like Rawson's. It was a puzzle, which Rawson himself did not seem in the slightest degree inclined to explain.

Townsend & Co., sticking to the story of the surreptitious smokes, had suggested that Rawson had gone a little further in playing the "giddy ox," and had lost money on geegees. All the Giddy Goats knew how money went when it went in that direction.

money went when it went in that direction.

Jimmy Silver had heard the suggestion, but he did not believe it. Rawson had too much sturdy commonsense to waste money in that way, and he had very strong views on the subject of racing generally, too. More than once the nuts, with undisguised contempt, had heard him express his indignation that horse-racing was allowed at all in war-time. But if Rawson had not been betting, it was hard to guess why he was in such extreme need of money.

In the case of any other fellow, the matter would not have attracted much attention; but in poor Rawson's case, the nuts of Rookwood were keen to draw attention to it, and make it the



THE SCHOLARSHIP BOY'S

SECRET

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"But his friends have rallied round. "But his friends have rallied round. Deeply conscious of the honour done to Rookwood by the arrival of this superior person in our midst, we have raised a small fund to relieve him of pecuniary embarassment. We have whacked out—especially our generous friend Topham has whacked out—"Oh, don't mensh!" said Topham modestly.
"But our combined efforts we have

modestly.

"By our combined efforts, we have raised a fund for presentation to our friend Rawson, in acknowledgment of the honour he has done us by comin' to reside in our midst," said Adolphus. "In the name of Rawson's friends, I hereby make the presentation."

And Adolphus, with a flourish, drew two coins from his waistcoatpocket, and laid them on the table at Rawson's elbow.

'There was a buzz as the glimmer of gold was seen

There was a buzz as the glimmer of gold was seen.

"Half-quids!" gasped Hooker.

"Oh, my hat!"

The juniors stared at Smythe in amazement. They had expected his ironical oration to wind up with some joke at Rawson. The sight of the gold coins seemed to show that he was in earnest.

Rawson blinked at the two coins.

Only himself knew how much the money would have meant to him. But he shook his head.

"I suppose you're serious, as you've headed out the

he shook his head.

"I suppose you're serious, as you've handed out the money," he said.
"But I can't take it."
"Oh, do!" said Adolphus.
"Do!" chorused the nuts.
"It's all yours," said Howard.
"With our kindest regards."
"As a special favour to us," said Adolphus, "we beg you to accept our little presentation. Don't be proud. The one fault of the lower—I mean the upper classes—is that they are proud. As a special favour—"
There was a yell from Flynn, who was peering at the two gold coins on the table.
"Sure, they're not half-quids."

"Sure, they're not half-quids."
"What!"

"Sure, they're not half-quids."
"What!"
"They're farthings!" yelled Flynn.
"Farthings painted with gold paint."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
There was a burst of laughter in the common-room. All the fellows could see Smythe's little joke at last.
But Rawson did not laugh.
His flushed face became pale. He had been puzzled, but patient. He had a simple nature, and it had really seemed to him for the moment that Adolphus & Co. had meant kindly, though in a tactless way.
He understood now.
The whole room was howling with

He understood now.

The whole room was howling with laughter. The nuts were howling, too—and Adolphus' eyeglass had dropped off in his great merriment.

But his merriment had a sudden

Rawson stepped forward and hit out straight from the shoulder. There was a loud yell—not of laughter—from the great Adolphus, and he went tumbling heels over head among the nuts.

# The 6th Chapter. The I O U.

Crash!
Adolphus Smythe went to the floor, dragging down Townsend and Howard, whom he had caught wildly hold of to save himself. Then there was a yell from Jinmy Silver.
"Ha, ha! Well hit!"
Rawson had not finished yet. He was rushing forward. His face was pale with anger, and he was hitting out hard and quick. Topham rolled over Townsend, and Tracy was sent reeling by a blow on the chin. Peele backed away, but not in time. A drive on the chest laid him on his back.

The whole party of merry nuts were a the floor, but they did not look

on the floor, but they did not look very merry now.

The Fistical Four roared with laughter, and it was echoed all over the room. The sudden downfall of Adolphus & Co. seemed to the Fourth-Formers the climax of the joke, and they shricked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Rawson!"

"Get up and have some more, Towny!"

"I understand. I'll sign it," said Jimmy.

There was a moisture in Rawson's eyes.

"I—I ought to tell you what it's for," he muttered; "only—only—"

"Never mind that. I know you're fair and square," said Jimmy at once.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Adolphus scrambled furiously to his feet. The laugh had turned against him, after all. And he was hurt.
"Rush him!" yelled Smythe.
"Collar the cad! Scrag him!"
"Me, too!" grinned Jimmy Silver, joining Rawson. "Back up, the end study!"
And Lovell and Raby and New-

And Lovell and Raby and New

come joined him at once.

"Come on!" said Jimmy Silver invitingly, as the great Adolphus paused. "Fair play's a jewel, you know. Come and scrag the lot of

'Yes, go it, Adolphus!" grinned

"Yes, go it, Adolphus!" grinned Flynn.
"Mop 'em up, Adolphus!"
"I—I decline to enter into a vulgar row with fags," gasped Adolphus.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Well, if you won't come on, we will!" said Jimmy Silver. "Come on, you chaps, and kick the cads out!"
The Fistical Four made a rush, and Rawson followed them up, and Adolphus & Co. were promptly bundled neck and crop out of the common-room. They were distributed in the passage, gasping and yelling, and left to sort themselves out.
Jimmy Silver returned to the chessboard, and Rawson, grinning, to his

board, and Rawson, grinning, to his

Adolphus & Co. did not return.
They were erawling away with mutual recriminations, feeling anything but victorious.

In the dormitory that night Townsend was seen bathing his nose, and Topham his eye, while Peele rubbed ointment on his chin. And they maintained a very dignified reserve towards

tained a very dignified reserve towards Rawson.

"Any more presentations coming along?" asked Jimmy Silver.

But the nuts of the Fourth did not reply to that question.

The screaming joke had fallen flat. Smythe & Co. had had little doubt that Rawson would accept the money, and when the half-sovereigns turned out to be gilded farthings they were prepared to enjoy Rawson's looks. But the little joke had fallen flat-and so had Adolphus & Co. It was not likely that there would be any more presentations to Rawson.

The next day after lessons Rawson.

and so had Adolphus & Co. It was not likely that there would be any more presentations to Rawson.

The next day after lessons Rawson joined Jimmy Silver when the Classical Fourth came out. The expression on his face gave Jimmy a hint of what was the matter.

"Well?" said Jimmy.

"I'm not going to borrow of you," said Rawson, with a faint smile.

"You'd be welcome," said Jimmy; "only I'm stony, old son. But if there's anything I can do—"

"I'd don't like asking you," said Rawson miserably. "But—but I don't get any more tin for some time, you know. And—and I want some badly. I feel like a sponging cad speaking to you about it. But—"

"I'll help if I can," said Jimmy wonderingly. "What do you want me to do?"

"I've been borrowing of Leggett. He won't lend me any tin unless—unless a chap he knows has got money signs the paper along with me."

Jimmy looked very grave.

"The less you have to do with that moneylending cad the better, Rawson," he said.

"I know that. But I must have the money. You know I wouldn't bilk you, Jimmy. I get some more from my scholarship at the end of the term. I can settle out of that. I'll give you all the particulars—"

"You needn't," said Jimmy. "I can take your word."

"Leggett's a cad. What are you going to borrow of him?"

"Ten shillings," said Rawson.

"Tenpence a week interest. I can manage that. And I shall settle the principal at the end of the term. But unless I get somebody to put their name on the paper—somebody he knows is all right—"

"I understand. I'll sign it," said Jimmy.

There was a moisture in Rawson's eyes.

"Trot out your I O U. Ten bob wouldn't bust me, even if I had to

pay it."
"You won't have to, Jimmy."
"I know that, fathead! Give me
the paper."

the paper."
Ten minutes later Rawson ran down Leggett of the Fourth in the quadrangle. Leggett held out his hand for the paper the scholarship boy handed to him.

"All serene," said Leggett.
"Timmy Silver's fist is good enough.

handed to him.

"All serenc," said Leggett.

"Jimmy Silver's fist is good enough
for me. And there's your tin."

He counted out nine shillings and

He counted out nine shillings and twopence.

"Ten bob!" said Rawson.

"First week's interest deducted," said Leggett coolly.

"You rotten Shylock!" growled Rawson. "I want the money!"

"Take it or leave it!" said Leggett, with a shrug of the shoulders.
Rawson walked away without replying. Leggett sauntered on, smiling. It was a good stroke of business—on Leggett's side—and the young rascal was not very deeply troubled with a conscience.

#### The 7th Chapter. The Secret Out.

Rawson hurried out of the School House immediately after lessons that day with his coat and cap on. And Muffin of the Fourth gave a howl to his friends.

day with his coat and cap on. And Muffin of the Fourth gave a howl to his friends.

"Come on, you fellows!"

"The beast is going out feeding again!" said Muffin. "He's in funds. Come on!"

"That's right!" said Hooker.

"He's been borrowing of Leggett—I saw him."

Flynn chuckled.

"Faith, we'll catch him in the act, intoirely! Come on, ye gossoons!"

Quite a little crowd of the Fourth followed Rawson to the gates, Townsend and Topham joined the party, and Flynn, Hooker, Jones minor, and several other fellows. They marched down the lane towards Coombe on the track of the unconscious Rawson. Rawson did not look back once.

He hurried on to the yillage with his long strides, and the juniors had to step out to keep pace with him. They were grinning over their little joke. Rawson's solitary spreads had caused great disgust, and the idea of catching him in the act, as it were, appealed to their sense of humour. Muffin was of opinion that the tuck ought to be raided as a punishment, while Townsend proposed "lathering" him with it. Flynn's idea was to make the greedy fellow feel ashamed of himself.

They reached the village, and there was a general gasp as Rawson was seen to enter the tobacconist's.

"I told you so!" chortled Muffin.

"What would Jimmy Silver say now?" grinned Townsend.

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"Howly Mother av Moses!" said Flynn, in disgust. "Well, the spal-peen is bowled out now, and I'll have somethin' to say to him intoirely." "Here he comes!"

"Here he comes!"
Rawson came out of the shop with a little packet in his hand. He stepped along to Mrs. Wicks' little shop and went in.
"Tuck this time," said Jones minor.
"We'll keep him in sight, and drop on him when he starts on it," said Muffin eagerly. "He don't gorge it in the shop; he didn't last time. Takes it away in a box to some quiet corner, the mean beast!"
Townsend peeped into the shop.
Rawson was standing there with his back to the door, giving orders to old Mrs. Wicks.
"What's he getting?" asked Muffin

Nawson was standing there with his back to the door, giving orders to old Mrs. Wicks.

"What's he getting?" asked Muffin breathlessly.

"Tuck!" said Townsend. "Cheese and a glass jar of ham and a loaf. Now he's asking for grease-proof paper to wrap the loaf in."

"What the dickens does he want that for?"

"Blessed if I know."

"And a pound jar of marmalade, and a pound of biscuits," went on Townsend. "We'll jolly well lather him with the marmalade!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now he's asked for a box—"

"He did last time," said Muffin. "What does he want a box for?"

"To carry the tuck in, I suppose." Townsend, somewhat puzzled, peered round the corner of the door again. Rawson, quite unconscious of the espial, was busy at the counter. Mrs. Wicks had handed him an empty cardboard box, such as sweets are packed in. Rawson rolled the loaf up carefully in the grease-proof paper, and packed it in the box, and carefully packed in his other purchases round it. The packet of smokes went in along with the rest.

Then he purchased three sheets of brown paper at a penny each, and carefully wrapped up the box, cording it with thick string he produced from his pocket.

"What's he doing now?" gasped Muffin heathless."

it with thick string he produced from his pocket.

"What's he doing now?" gasped Muffin breathlessly.

"Wrapped it all up," said Townsend, mystified. "Blessed if I understand what he's up to at all, Hallo! He's coming out."

Rawson came striding out of the village shop. He glanced carelessly at the group of juniors, and crossed the street.

at the group of jumors, and crossed the street.

"After him!" said Muffin.

"My hat! He's gone into the post-office."

"Sure, it's quare! What's the little game intoirely?"

Townsend burst into a chuckle.

"Fve got it! Bet you he's going to send himself a parcel to Rookwood, to make out that he gets parcels like other chaps."

to make out that he gets parcels like other chaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's it," said Topham. "Let's watch him."

The curious crowd crossed over to the village post-office. They looked in at the door. Rawson was standing at the counter, and his box was on the scales.

"Under eleven pounds?"/ they heard him ask

heard him ask.

Yes-only eight," said the postmaster

master.

"Thank you. I'll address it now."
Rawson moved over to the portion of the counter reserved for telegrams, and dipped a pen in the ink, and began to address the parcel.

Hooker, with a grin, stole in on tiptoe, behind Rawson, to read the address over his shoulder. Rawson was too busy to think of looking round.

Hooker stared at the address over his shoulder. Rawson was writing it in large block letters. It ran:

"PRIVATE R. RAWSON,
00116, 2nd Middlesex Regiment,
Prisoner of War,
Paderborn, Germany."

Hooker's jaw dropped as he read the unexpected address. Rawson drew a label from his pocket, to ad-dress also, and as he moved the back of his head came into violent contact with the inquisitive Hoker's chion.

this head came into violent contact, with the inquisitive Hoker's chion. Crack!
"Oh!" gasped Rawson.
"Yow-ow-wpppp!" yelled Hooker.
Rawson turned round, his eyes

Rawson turned blazing.

"You rotter! You were—"

"Yow-ow!" gasped Hooker, nursing his chin. "I—I'm sorry, Rawson. I am really. I—I didn't know your brother was a prisoner in Germany! I—I beg your pardon."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Rawson.

Rawson.

He addressed the label, fastened it on securely, and handed the parcel over to the postmaster. Then he strode out of the post-office. Hooker followed him, still rubbing his chin.

"Well?" said Townsend breath-lessly. "Was the cad addressing it to himself?"

"Who are you calling a cad?"
growled Hooker. "He's worth fifty
of you, and chance it, Towny."
Townsend stared.
"Why you ass.—"

Townsend stared.

"Why, you ass—"

"Pretty lot of worms you are, to be following the chap about, and watching him, and suspecting him!"
jeered Hooker. "Jolly decent chap, I think. "Tain't every fellow who'd spend his last bob sending grub to a prisoner in Germany."

"A—a prisoner in Germany!"

prisoner in Germany."

"A—a prisoner in Germany!"
howled the astounded juniors.

"Yes," said Hooker crushingly.

"His brother's a prisoner of war, and Rawson's sending him grub, and if you fellows can't be decent enough to know a decent chap when you see one—."

to know a decent chap when you see one—"

"Oh, draw it mild," said Townsend, for once almost ashamed of himself. "You were with us, anyway, Hooker. I—I didn't know his brother was a prisoner; he's never said anything about it—"

"He wouldn't, to you," said Hooker. "Well, I've begged his pardon, and if you're decent, you'll do the same."

"Oh rats!" said Townsend.

'Oh, rats!" said Townsend.

The 8th Chapter, Staunch as Steel!

Jimmy Silver & Co. burst wrathfully into Rawson's study about an hour later. They had heard of the expedition, and the curious discovery that had resulted. And they were naturally wrathful.

"You bounder!" shouted Jimmy.

"You mysterious beast!" hooted Lovell.

Rawson jumped up in alarm.

Rawson jumped up in alarm.
"What's the row? Whickens—" What the

"What's the row! What the dickens—"
"We've heard all about it!" growled Jimmy. "Why couldn't you tell your old pals that your brother was a prisoner with the Huns—what?"
"I suppose these silly asses have

what?"
"I suppose these silly asses have been gassing!" growled Rawson, frowning. "Why can't they mind their own business?"
"Why didn't you tell us?" howled

Raby.

"Why didn't you tell us?" howled Raby.

"Well, I—I couldn't!" said Rawson. "You—you see, Dick was taken prisoner by those Hun beasts, and there was a letter home, and we knew he was on awfully hard tack, though he couldn't say much. I—I wanted to send him what I could—you know how our men are starved by the Huns in the prison camps. But—but I couldn't tell you fellows. I—it would have looked as if I—I wanted you to stand something for him, and—and it wasn't your business—I mean, you weren't called upon to do anything of the sort, and I didn't want to look like sponging. I wish those silly duffers had minded their own business."

"I see," said Jimmy Silver. "Perhaps there's a little sense in what you say, but not much—not very much. Upon the whole, we won't bump you as we were going to. We'll punish you another way—through your brother Dick."

"Eh! What do you mean?"

"I mean," said Jimmy Silver sternly, "that as soon as we get our allowances, we're going to make up a stunning parcel, crammed with grub and smokes, and send it to Brother Dick, without so much as saying, 'By your leave!"

"Hear, hear!" said the Co.

your leave!" said the Co.

heartily.

Rawson grinned.

"I see; you're beginning already," he said.

"And we're going to keep on," said Jimmy Silver. "The end study herewith and hereby adopts your Brother Dick, and regards him as our Brother Dick. And if you raise the slightest objection to our sending tuck to our Brother Dick, you will get a whole set of thick ears, Tom Rawson."

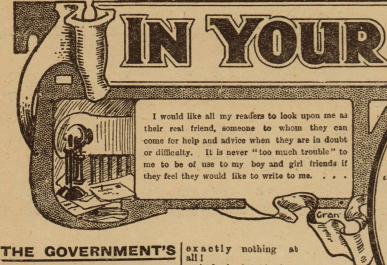
And Rawson did not wis the Co.

And Rawson did not raise objections.

Somewhat to Rawson's surprise, he found himself wonderfully popular in the Fourth Form that day. And for the next week or two it was quite the fashion in the Fourth Form to send off parcels to Brother Dick; and however much the other prisoners in Hun camps went on short commons, it was certain that Brother Dick, at least, was remarkably well supplied.

THE END.

(Another magnificent long com-plete tale of the Rookwood chums in next Monday's Boys' Friend, entitled "Rallying Round Rawson!" Order your copy in advance to avoid dis-appointment.;



# RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF PAPER!

Y readers will no doubt be surprised, and also no doubt disappointed, to find a slight decrease in the number of pages in this week's issue of their favourite paper. I can assure them that they do not regret this change more than I do. It gives me them that they do not regret this change more than I do. It gives me quite a pang to have to make the reduction. But to make it was the only way of carrying on. The restrictions imposed by the Government on the use of paper are the cause. It is no matter for argument; we are simply told that we MUST use less paper, and all we can do is to obey. I have the firmest faith in the loyalty of my readers, and I feel sure that this explanation is all they will want. They will not desert the good old Boys' FRIEND because of hard times, but will go on hoping, as I do, for better times in the near future.

I have, in common with all publishers in the United Kingdom, been compelled by the law of the land to decrease the size of the Boys' FRIEND at once. This gave me no time to rearrange the programme of stories, and for the convenience of the printers the famous series of stories by S. Clarke Hook had to be held over for the time being.

As soon as possible, the programme of stories, and other good things I have in store for you, will be introduced, and I can honestly assure my chums that in the Boys' FRIEND they are still getting a bargain—and a very good bargain, too—in spite of this drastic cutting down of the national paper supply.

#### ORDER IN ADVANCE.

Another way in which the shortage of paper will affect us is that the supply of copies to newsagents for chance sales will have to be cut down. So be careful to order in advance, or you may get left!

#### OUR FRIENDS THE RUSSIANS.

I have received a letter from a correspondent signing himself "Musquash," from which I am going to make some extracts. I should be sorry to think that any of my readers laboured under such delusions as "Musquash" appears to cherish. He writes:—

"We are always talking about German cruelties, and now, since Bulgaria has taken the side of our enemies, we hear of that country's cruelties. But why haven't the newspapers the pluck to publish Russian cruelties? Nearly every educated person knows that Russia is really a lanu of savages and barbarians, and some of the cruelties Russian Cossacks have done against Jews would put the Huns' cruelties in the shade. This is one of the reasons why I do not join the Anti-German League. I know that we have got an ally who is as bad as Germany."

Probably the writer of this letter is

Probably the writer of this letter is a Jew. It is true that in the past very savage things have been done to the Jews in Russia. I am not seeking to excuse these things in the least degree. But in the past very savage things were done by Englishmen in Ireland and elsewhere. Would it be fair to blacken the good name of our fine fellows at the Front because of them? I will not say that the past does not matter, but I will say that the present matters much more. What evidence has "Musquash" of the Russian atrocities he alleges? If it is no better than the evidence upon which he bases his absurd statement as to the character of the Russian nation generally, it is worth just

exactly nothing at all!

As far back as the days of the Crimean War, Britons found Russians gallant and generous enemies. That is one reason why we are glad and proud to fight side by side with them to-day. It is absolutely untrue that every educated person knows that Russia is a land of savages and barbarians. On the contrary, educated people know that it is nothing of the sort. Somewhat behind the rest of Europe in the matter of education it may be, but it is a country with a great future, and whatever the faults of the Russian common people may be, cruelty is certainly not one of them. The moujik, as the Russian peasant is called, is a very good-hearted, easy-going, simple-minded fellow, with about as much cruelty in him as a Newfoundland dog! Even the Cossack, at his wildest, does not come near the Bulgarian or the "Kultured" German in cruelty.

#### BRIEF REPLIES.

R. G. S. (Cornwall).—More stories about Cy Sprague? Well, we must think about it.

"Woo-Zoo."—You can obtain the information you require concerning rear-lights on bicycles from your local police authorities. For information on Army matters, apply to your nearest recruiting-office.

"A Loyal Reader" (Highbury).—I cannot promise definitely to introduce an African boy into the Rookwood stories, but your suggestion shall be sent on to Mr. Owen Conquest.

L. E. V. (Guernsey).—What is

L. E. V. (Guernsey).—What is Garnett Bell's age? Sorry, my chum, but this is a deep, dark secret. Like all detectives, Garnett Bell is very particular on this matter.

F. A. Flack (Manchester).—Many thanks for your complimentary letter, and for letting me see your sketch. Sorry, but the latter is not quite up to publication standard.

quite up to publication standard.

John Balfour (Liverpool).—Lovell,
Raby, and Newcome have been
longer at Rookwood than Jimmy
Silver. The Headmaster's daughter
is fourteen years of age. I will consider your suggestion with regard tohaving a competition in the "Boys'
Friend." Bob is seventeen years of
age, Darkey eighteen, and Dan
twenty-one.

stater your suggestion with results having a competition in the "Boys' Friend." Bob is seventeen years of age, Darkey eighteen, and Dan twenty-one.

W. Thomas (Devonport).—A supplement on the lines you suggest may be published at some future date. I should not like to say which school possesses the better scouts, Rookwood or Greyfriars.

"A Loyal 'Un."—Thanks for verses. They are very interesting. I wish I could spare the space to publish them, but, owing to the paper shortage, every inch is needed for story matter.

"Constant Reader" (Battersea).—Write to Messrs. A. W. Gamage & Son, Ltd., High Holborn, London, W.C., for the article you require

E. B.—You can obtain the book you require from Messrs. A. G. Spalding & Co., 78, Cheapside, London, E.C.

Arthur Bone (Oxford).—You want a story in which Dan makes "lub," do you? Well, I must see what Mr. S. Clarke Hook thinks of the suggestion. How can you find out whether a young lady cares for you, or not? Ask her, of course!

"A Loyal Reader" (Surrey)—You were out on a farm one day shooting with a catapult, and a gamekeeper came along and took the catapult away. Had he the right to do such a thing? Well, it all depends upon what you were shooting at. If you were aiming at birds, or anything that did not belong to you, most certainly he was within his rights in confiscating the article.

COMPANION PAPERS: "THE BOYS' FRIEND,"1d. Every Monday. "THE MACNET" LIBRARY, 1d. Every Monday. "THE CREYFRIARS HERALD," id. Every Monday.
"THE CEM" LIBRARY, 1d. Every Wednesday. COMPLETE LIBRARY. "THE PENNY POPULAR." Every Friday. "CHUCKLES," PRICE &d. Every Saturday. \*

H. Hines (Adelaide).—Yes, Colonial readers can enter for our Storyette Competition. There are about two hundred and forty boys at Rookwood.

Private J. Carol, 14928 (76th Brigade Headquarters, 3rd Division, British Expeditionary Force, France), and Cyclist P. H. Cook, 5099 (3rd Division, Cyclists' Company, British Expeditionary Force, France) are in need of books to read.

"A Faithful Reader (Heathfield).—You can procure a good book on

You can procure a good book on ventriloquism from Messrs. L. Upcott Gill, Bazaar Buildings, Drury Lane, London, W.C., for one-and-fourpence, post free. Yes, five feet eight inches is quite a good height for a lad of sixteen.

A Loyal Admirer" (St. Anne's-on-Sea).—I am not sure whether there is a Lancashire lad at Rookwood. If there is, no doubt Mr. Owen Conquest will introduce him into one of his future stories.

quest will introduce him into one of his future stories.

H. C. B. (Barking).—No, there is not a Barking boy at Rookwood.

H. L. H.—Consult a doctor about your complaint. Home treatment sometimes proves effective, but it is always best to obtain sound medical advice.

softenines provided advice.

H. W. P. (Luton).—Your wish shall be conveyed to Mr. Duncan Storm. But surely "The Secret of the Seas" meets with your approval?

A. Marriott (Ouseburn).—The series dealing with Dan, Bob, and Darkey is the first one published in the "Boys" Friend" introducing these popular characters.

C. W. Wade.—Still once again! Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Newcome are each fifteen years of age.

"A Girl Friend."—Rookwood and Bagshot are in Hampshire, Greyfriars and Highcliffe in Kent.

"A Constant Reader."—Physical exercises will help you to increase your height.

"A Constant Reader."—Physical exercises will help you to increase your height.

Norman Crompton.—See reply to "A Loyal Admirer."

Nora Preece (Montreal).—Yes, Canadian readers can join our League. Much regret your storyette was not quite suitable for publication. Try again.

"A Kentish Chum."—Write to Messrs. W. and G. Foyle, Booksellers, Try again.

A Kentish Chum."—Write to Messrs. W. and G. Foyle, Booksellers, 121, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C., for the book you require. Don't forget to enclose a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

Don't forget to enclose a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

E. J. B.—You are too young to join the Army. You can, however, join the Navy. If you care to send me your full name and address, I shall have much pleasure in forwarding you a useful little pamphlet.

C. J. R. (Millom).—The war stories you mention are out of print. "Polruan's Millions," "The Trail of the Redskins," and "A Tale of Twelve Cities" will probably be issued in book form at some future date.

W. J. S. (Cambridge).—Many thanks for your complimentary letter. Glad to learn our stories make such a strong appeal to you. Your sletch is not at all bad, but hardly up to publication standard.

"A Very Loyal Friendite."—See reply to C. J. R.

F. E. C.—Leave Hypnotism well alone. It is not a suitable hobby for a healthy-minded boy.

Upon Editor



.. 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 stammed 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 Flectway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.O.

#### DISCIPLINE.

Mrs. Johnson had three children, and although she was a very kind mother in many respects, she was very strict on obedience. One afternoon a storm broke over the district, and Mrs. Johnson ordered her eldest son, Tommy, to close the trap leading to the flat roof of the house.

"But, mother—" began Tommy.

"Tommy," cried Mrs. Johnson, "I told you to shut the trap!"

"Yes, mother, but—"

"Tommy, shut the trap!" ordered the irate Mrs. Johnson once again.

"All right, mother, if you say so, but—"

"Tommy!" aisquiated Mrs. Johnson "Tommy."

"All right, mother, if you say so, but—"
"Tommy!" ejaculated Mrs. Johnson, reaching for her cane.
Tommy immediately took to his heels, and climbing the stairs, he shut the trap. Later, when the family gathered for dinner, it was discovered that Aunt Mary was missing.
"Where's auntie?" asked the fond mother of little Tommy. "Have you seen her?"
"Yes. mother," said Tommy

"Yes, mother," said Tommeekly, "I wanted to tell you sor time ago, but you wouldn't let m She's on the roof!"—Sent in by I Blight, Manchester.

#### CATCHING THE COLLECTOR!

Percival Jones owned some houses, and, therefore, he found it his bounden duty every Monday morning to visit his tenants and collect the rent which was due to him.

Upon calling at Mrs. Mackenzie's he found that Mrs. Mac was not at home. Whether she had gone out to meet Mr. Jones or whether she had gone to miss him, it is impossible to say. The fact remains that her eldest son Jimmy answered the door, and stated that mother was not at home, and, therefore, the rent could not be paid.

Mr. Jones thought that if he commenced a conversation with the boy it might while away the time until Mrs. Mackenzie returned.

"And so you are a large family,"

it might while and,
Mrs. Mackenzie returned.

"And so you are a large family,
my boy?" he said, by way of starting
the conversation.

"Yes," replied Jimmy. "There
are ten of us boys, and we each have
a sister."

a sister."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mr.
Percival Jones, in amazement.

"Then there are twenty of you?"

"No," replied the boy: "only eleven!"—Sent in by L. K. Wadland, Crediton.

#### BAD ENOUGH AT THAT!

Jim and Bill were old pals in life. They had not seen one another for many years, and now that they had met after such a length of time, each was naturally anxious to know what the other had been doing since they last met.

the other had been doing with last met.

"What have you been doing with yourself all this long time, Bill?" asked Jim. "Been working hard?"

"That I have," replied Bill.

"Jolly hard!"

"Where have you been working?" pursued Jim.

"In gao!! replied Bill abruptly.

"In gao!!" echoed his companion.

"Well, I'd be ashamed to own it!"

"Fathead!" exclaimed Bill. "I
didn't own it; I was simply a
boarder!"—Sent in by Ethel
McNair, Nottingham.

"Ah, doctor," said Mrs. Murphy to the medical practitioner, "my 'usband is terribly ill! What ever can

"Well, Mrs. Murphy," replied the doctor, "I cannot say until I have examined your husband. I will see him."

Mrs. Murphy led the medical man to the room where her husband was lying sick.

"How do you feel, my good man?" asked the doctor.
"Sure, doctor," replied Mr. Murphy, "I do feel bad."

The doctor asked some more questions, then he turned to Mrs. Murphy.

again.
"Did you give him the black draught?" he asked.
"Sure, doctor," said Mrs. Murphy,
"I couldn't find a black draught, so I gave him a double-six domino!"
Sent in by James Horn, Gosport.

#### THE ROOT OF THE EVIL.

THE ROOT OF THE EVIL.

A short time ago a large factory fitted with the most modern appliances, including electric light, caught fire, and, despite the most strenuous efforts of the fire brigade, was almost demolished.

The following morning a newly-appointed member of the police force was despatched to the shop to see how the fire had originated. After closely questioning the manager of the factory, he asked to see the man who was responsible for the electric light.

The manager stated that the electric switches were under his sole control.

"Then you are the man who lights."

"Then you are the man who lights up the electric affair," said the police-

up the electric affair," said the policeman.

"That is so," replied the manager.

"Now, be careful how you answer my next question," said the policeman, bubbling over with excitement, "'cos if it ain't satisfactory, it will be took down as evidence again' ye. When you lighted the electric light, last night, where did you throw the match?"—Sent in by A. G. Feakes, Bristol.

#### BOUND TO BAG ONE.

Pat had recently enlisted, and was undergoing his first course of musketry. When all had finished, the Irishman was reprimanded for bad shooting, and the instructor told him he would have to do better at the next distance, which was seven rounds of quick-firing.

"Now, Pat, you fire at No. 5 target."

"Now, Pat, you fire at No. 5 target."
Pat banged away his seven rounds, and waited for the result, which showed that every bullet had hit No. 4 target, No. 5 being untouched.
"What target did you aim at?" asked the irate instructor.
"No. 5, sir," answered Pat.
"You have hit No. 4 every time," roared the instructor.
"No. 4, sir," said Pat. "Begorra, it would be a grand thing in war! Sure, I might aim at a private and hit a general!"—Sent in by A. E. Soper, Newton Abbot.

### MONEY PRIZES OFFERED!

#### RILLING ADVENTURE! AMAZING NEW STORY



Published Every Monday

#### THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

JACK HAWKINS, and his two chums, SANDY COCHRANE and PAT BLAKE, are searching for work in London, when they come across CAPTAIN TOM TIDDLER. The latter is a good old salt of the sea, and he immediately takes a great liking to the hovs.

he immediately takes a great liking to the boys.

He tells them that he is going in search of vast treasures amounting in value to one thousand million pounds, and asks them if they would care to accompany him. The boys accept the offer with alerity. The captain adds that the expedition will be a hazardous one, for his powerful enemies. SATAN GOMEZ and his spies, will do their utmost to thwart his plans.

The captain and the two boys go on board the Golden Girl, and at length they reach a little bay off the coast of Spain. There they meet Satar Gomez, and the first encounter between the rivals finishes in the captain's favour.

Later the chums are picnicking on shore when they fall into Satan Gomez's clutches. The villain ties then to the ribs of an old ship which are sticking out of the water, and leaves them to the mercy of the rising tide.

(Read on from here.)

(Read on from here.)

#### Saved from the Wayes.

The situation in which the boys und themselves seemed well-nigh found

desperate.

There they were, doomed to be drowned in an hour and a half, within four hundred yards or so of their chimnetes.

The cove was shut off from the spot where the Java Queen was stranded by a jutting wall of rock. They could hear the clanging of the hammers and the shouts of the workers plainly as they stood there bound to the powerful salted timbers of the old wreck. The vengeance of Satan Gomez was indeed complete!

Jack was tugging hard on his

Indeed complete!

Jack was tugging hard on his wrists, which were bound behind him, round the timber of the wreck. He hoped that perhaps he could get a little play on the cords which held his wrists to the stake, and so chafe it away on a corner of the timber.

The faces of the boys were hearly submerged. Sometimes a wave washed right over their heads.

But they steadily refused to give up hope.

"Wow!" sputtered Pat. "We're getting like whales, an' come up to breathe when we feel like it. I wish

Then he could perhaps release the cords which were bound about his

Then he could perhaps release the cords which were bound about his neck and free his ankles.

But as the salt water soaked the cords, they swelled up, and he found that this manœuvre was hopeless.

"We are in a tight place, chaps," said he. "Satan Gomez knows how to make death as hard as possible for his victims. He'd ha' been more merciful if he had strangled us. But he has not made the lashings very tight round our necks!"

Even in this awful situation Pat was cheerful.

"Faix," said he. "I'm thinkip!"

was cheerful.

"Faix," said he, "I'm thinkin' that it's me that is goin' to be drowned first. That's the worst o' bein' the smallest in the family. He gets put upon—from wearin' out the old overcoats an' boots, to getting drowned first!"

drowned first!"

But Jack noticed that, even in this matter, Satan Gomez's villainous ingenuity had asserted itself. He had placed Pat, as the shortest closest inshore. Sandy came next, on the slight slope of the sands; whilst Jack, the tallest, was furthest out from the shore. So their chins were all more or less on a level.

The water were steadily on the boye'

The water rose steadily on the boys' chests, for there was a strong tide this afternoon. Now and then they would wait till it seemed to them that there was a lull in the noisy hammering on the stranded ship round beyond that jutting barrier of cliff.

Then Jack would give the word, and they would all shout together.

But they got no answer save from the gulls, who, curious at the sight of these three motionless, white figures, wheeled, shouting and whistling plaintively, close above their heads.

whistling plaintively, close above their heads.

But Pat was undaunted.

"Keep your chins up, boys," said he, "an' we'll die like soldiers—at our posts!" he added grimly.

Steadily the water rose.

The faces of the boys were nearly submerged. Sometimes a wave washed right over their heads.

But they steadily refused to give up hope.

those gulls wouldn't mock at us. It's all right for those that have wings!"

But, though Pat did not know it, it was the screaming, wheeling gulls who were to save them.

They could not see it, but as they were drowning a black, bobbing object, that danced like a cork on the waves, rounded the base of the giant cliff or rock that barred them off from the stranded liner.

It approached faster than the drift of the tide.

In fact, it was nothing more or less than Snowball's head.

Snowball had finished washing up his dinner-things, and his eye had been caught by the wheeling of seabirds above the cove, and the arrival of gulls flying in from seaward attracted by the screaming of their companions.

attracted by the screaming of their companions.

Above all things, Snowball was a fisherman. He suspected that there were fish in the cove where the boys had gone to bathe. He had nothing particular to do at the moment, and everybody was so busy on the stranded liner that there was no one to set him on a job.

"Bless my soul!" Snowball had said to himself. "I think, Mister Snowball, you better go an' see what dem boys of yours is about. Dey hab de boat. You take knife an' fishin'-line, an' you catch some good fish!"

Snowball did not hesitate. He

sh!"

Snowball did not hesitate. He strapped on his sheath-knife which he had just whetted up to a razor-finish, in case he caught a conger-eel or two, and, hanging a coil of fishing-line, with its hooks protected by lumps of cork, about his neck, he quietly slipped into the water.

Snowball never worried about taking a boat for short distances. He could swim like a fish, and was as happy in the water as he was out of it.

happy in the water as he was out of it.

He swam off round the jutting point of rock into the cove.

He saw the boys' boat rocking off the shore where they had moored it, and he swam to the sandy beach, and marched out of the water, shaking himself like a dog.

"Now where's dem young rascals gone to?" he asked himself.

Then a sudden pang of anxiety shot through his faithful heart. He saw the boys' clothes and the remnant of their lunch lying on the rocks. But no trace of the boys was to be seen.

"Dose bad boys!" he exclaimed.
"Dey's makin' a laugh of deir ole Uncle Snowball! Dey's gettin' a laugh ob dis nigger!"

But, all the same, Snowball put his hand to his mouth and shouted anxiously.

hand to his motion
anxiously

He heard a faint, gurgling response.
Then the close wheeling of the gulls
about the half-submerged ribs of the
old wreck drew his eye.

With a sudden exclamation he
dashed into the water, and hurled
himself upon the rib to which Pat was
tied.

Then he dived

Then he dived like a fish, knife in hand, hacking at the cord which was about the boy's ankles.

One after the other Snowball helped the boys ashore. Then he turned his attention to Pat, who was insensible, putting him through the movements for the apparently drowned. It was not long before Pat opened his eyes and sighed as he saw Snow-ball's friendly, black face leaning over him.

DUNGAR

him.

"Faix!" he said weakly. "We are not so dead, after all. How did you come here, old Snowball?"

Snowball, having got over his

Snowball, having got over his anxiety, sat down on the sand and laughed.

anxiety, said down on the said and laughed.

"I swim," said he; "I swim like a li'l fiss. And I find you young genelmen, all under water like li'l fisses, too! Yaw—haw! Haw, haw! Yaw! Haw, haw, haw! Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho! Hee—haw!"

And Snowball laughed till the tears ran down his black face.

The boys let him have his laugh out. They knew that a nigger must laugh when he feels like it, and that this laughing-fit of Snowball's was only a sort of back kick from the shock of finding them in their deadly peril.

Presently, Snowball stopped laughing. He dried his eyes, and his face grew stern and fierce.

"Who tie you to dose posties?" he

asked.

"It was Satan Gomez," replied Jack. "He surprised us ashore when we had bathed and were eating our lunch. He and over a dozen of his crowd had come ashore from the Albatross in the submarine. That is why you did not see him from the ship. He and his gang caught us, and tied us up to drown when the tide rose. And they very nearly did it, too. If it hadn't have been for you, Snowball, we should have been gone by now!"

And he and Sandy and Pat reached asked.

and he and Sandy and Pat reached out their hands to the faithful negro.

Snowball shook their hands, gripping them hard in his black paw.

But he did not smile now. His face was set and hard and terrible, and his black eyes reddened with blood. The veins stood up in his neck and forehead.

"Sit yo' dere, boys!" said he. "It is good foh you to rest a li'l while till you feel mo' better."

The boys were not sorry to sit for a bit, for they were all feeling a bit shaken and queer after their trying experience.

They watched Snowball curiously

They watched Snowball curiously as he started, gathering up sand in his hands and making it into a wide circle, like a kid playing at the sea-

Having made a circle, he paced across the sand and traced out another circle about ten yards away from it, and repeated the pacing till, on the wide, smooth sand, there were thirteen circles.

thirteen circles.

In each of these he built a little heap of wrack, to which he set fire with the box of matches he took from the pocket of Jack's coat.

Then from the little antelope's horn which was hung as a charm about his neck he emptied a small pinch of black powder into the palm of his hand.

the cord which was about the boy's ankles.

He dragged Pat to the shore, and laid him down on the sand. Then he plunged back and released Sandy, who was not yet insensible, and who could cling for safety to the timber which had so near proved his death.

Then he plunged again and released Jack, the glittering knife, slashing true and steady through the soaked cords.

"T'm all right!" gasped Jack, "Get Sandy to the beach. I'll hang on to this timber."

The cord which was pinch of black powder into the palm of his hand.

The boys were wonderstruck as Snowball commenced to sing a wild chant in a high voice, dancing round in and out of the circles with a curious, rhythmic step. As he passed each fire he dusted it with a pinch of dust he held in his palm, and the boys gave a cry of astonishment.

From the first fire went up a cloud of bright, orange-coloured smoke. From the second fire a similar column of blue smoke rose. From the third green; from the fourth purple. And as the columns of thick, multicoloured in the fires, always keeping the same course, and always setting his foot exactly in his own footstep.

Then, of a sudden, he came to a standstill over the fire in the central circle. His eyes were almost standing out of his head, and his body was in a division to the circles with a curious, rhythmic step. As he passed each fire he dusted it with a pinch of dust he held in his palm, and the boys gave a cry of astonishment.

From the first fire went up a cloud of bright, orange-coloured smoke.

From the first fire went up a cloud of bright, orange-coloured smoke.

From the first fire went up a cloud of bright, orange-coloured smoke.

From the first fire went up a cloud of bright, orange-coloured smoke.

From the first fire went up a cloud of br

The boys heard the first name, which was that of Satan Gomez. The other twelve names they could not distinguish. Then Snowball shouted a long barangue in his own tongue, not a word of which the boys could understand. He seemed to be chanting the words, and ended up at last on a shrill, wailing note. Then, sinking down to his knees, he laid himself out flat and rigid on the sand like one in a trance.

sorth, waning note. The string down to his knees, he laid himself out flat and rigid on the sand like one in a trance.

The boys did not dare to disturb him. They could only gaze at this new and strange Snowball with wonder-stricken eyes.

Presently Snowball sat up as though waking from a dream, looking around him as though wondering where he was. Then he scrambled to his feet, and marched out of his magic circle looking weary and spent.

He sat down by the boys, with a sigh of exhaustion. The coloured smoke had died out of the fires, which had burned away to tiny heaps of white ash.

"What have you been doing?" asked Jack curiously.

The savage glitter came into Snowball's eyes again.

"I hab been calling de names ob Satan Gomez an' de men who try to kill you!" said he, in a harsh voice. "Dey try to kill der good boys dat old Snowball lub. So I put de Obeah on dem!"

Jack understood. He had heard something of the dread Obeah worship-which obtains amongst the Coast natives, and which, even to this day, the Governments of the West Coast of Africa cannot stamp out.

"I put de Obeah on dem!" said Snowball, in a gloomy voice. "Dey all die inside o' one year—some by shark, some by fire, some by water, and some by dis knife."

And he held his glittering blade in the air.

"But how did you know their names" asked Jack guriously.

And he held his glittering blade in the air.

"But how did you know their names?" asked Jack curiously.

Snowball shivered.

"I know," said he. "My mudder—she was a Kroo princess and great Obeah woman. She taught me Obeah. But Obeah not good to make. We no talk more about 'im!" And with this hint, Snowball was silent.

silent.

But the boys noticed that he would

But the boys noticed that he would not let them go near the place where he had danced, or the circles where he had made his fires.

Jack was moving to have a look. He was wonderstruck to see that wherever Snowball had stepped, he had left only one print of his foot on the sand. There was not even a double footprint where he had passed a dozen times. He had placed his foot each time true to a thousandth part of an inch.

He would have liked to have asked Snowball about this, but the Krooman seized him savagely by the shoulder.

"You no go dere, Mars'r Jack,"

man seized him savagely by the shoulder.

"You no go dere, Mars'r Jack," said he, "or you get all de bad luck I hab made for Satan Gomez and his men, and dey go free. I no wan' to kill you—I wan' to kill dem scoundrels!"

There was no doubt that Snowball was immensely in earnest. So Jack obeyed him:

"Now we go back to de ships," said Snowball. "And you boys, you not tell no one dat I did Obeah! Datwould bring terrible bad luck to all ob us!"

The boys promised Snowball that they would not tell anyone, and they kept their word. And all that afternoon they noticed that Snowball was very quiet and dull, as though he had got a bad headache. He never smiled, and went to bed as soon as he could.

And afterwards they all agreed that whatever doing Obeah might be, it was pretty hard work on the Obeah

man.

Later on, they had reason to remember, on several occasions, that bright, sunny afternoon on the Portuguese coast when Snowball put the Obeah on the men who had tried to murder them. For water, fire, the sharks; and Snowball's knife all played their part in avenging them on their would-be murderers.

#### Cheating Satan Gomez.

When they got back to the ship it was half-past three in the afternoon, and all was ready for firing the charges of gelignite which were to finish the work of cutting three-quarters of the great liner away from the bow that was firmly fixed to the rocks.

rocks.

They did not say anything of their adventure to Captain Tiddler, who was up to his eyes in work, superintending the fixing of the insulated wires connected with the underwater mines to the firing-boxes which were to explode them.

Leadsmen, armed with light sound-

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### BLUSHING.

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THE SECRET OF THE

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previous page.)

"Now, boys," said the captain, with a grin, "in the next five minutes I'm going to save three hundred thousand pounds' worth of ship, and make a hundred thousand pounds by doing so, or she'll stay where she is and she will be a total wreck in a week, whilst the Golden Girl will be a hundred thousand pounds poorer. No cure, no pay, are my terms, signed and sealed with her owners. Everything is cut through inside her, decks and stringers and girders. She's only hanging now by her outside skin, and I'm going to cut that away by exploding the gelignite charges which are fixed each side from her keel upwards. I fire the bottom one first."

He gave the handle of the firingbox a sharp turn. There was a dull thump under the keel of the vessel, and a fountain of white foam shot up ten feet high alongside.

steam was roaring from her escape-valves. Notwithstanding the large section which had been cut off behind the crumpled bows of the Queen of Java, the Golden Girl had still about eight thousand tons of ship and cargo to pull off.

But as yet she was putting no strain on the powerful hemp and steel hawsers which lay drooping in the

Presently Mike Cassidy, followed by his mate, came to the surface. Their faces were beaming as their copper diving-helmets were unscrewed and lifted from their red-capped heads. They had examined both sides of the ship, and had discovered that their work had been successful. The outside shell of the ship had been cut as clean as a whistle from the waterline to the keel, and the huge keel-plates had been parted by carefully-placed explosives.

The body of the ship was now en-

The body of the ship was now entirely separated from her torn and mangled bows. All that was now necessary was to pull her astern as soon as the flowing tide had lifted soon as the flo

Already there seemed to be a new life in the stern of the great liner. It no longer lay dead and inert as part of the rocks below, but felt

pudden that he broke the buttons off is party waistcoat."

Soon the leadsmen were shouting the depth of water again, and Captain Tiddler, taking a couple of signal flags in his hands, marched astern, followed by the boys, to communicate with the Golden Girl.

His flags flickered away with signal after signal, and presently a gentle churning of foam under the stern of the Golden Girl showed that she was going ahead on her tow-ropes, gradually working up her pulling strain on the great inert mass of the Queen of Java's hull.

"D'ye see, boys," explained Captain Tiddler, as he fluttered his signals, "it don't do to tighten up too quickly on a towing hawser. The hawser hasn't been built yet, steel or hemp, that will stand a strain being put on it suddenly. The old Golden Girl could break this lot like packthreads, if she went ahead suddenly at the full strength of her engines."

Gradually the hawsers tightened and strained, under their thick wadding of chafing bands, at the bitts of the liner.

But the great ship did not budge.

The Golden Girl increased the speed of her engines. The white smother of foam at her threshing propellers increased to a wide patch of

Tom Tubbs' reminiscences of the gentleman who was cut in half by a parted hawser were suddenly cut short. There was a bang like the report of a cannon, and Jack, who was peering round the corner of a steel deckhouse at the hawsers was suddenly pulled back head-over-heels by Tom Tubbs.

It was only just in time. A great whiplike end of ragged steel rope flicked back, cutting a four-inch stanchion in halves as though it were butter. Then the frazzled-out end knocked a stout teak door into splinters and lay still on the deck.

"That's the way a hawser goes, Master Jack," said Tom Tubbs. "I thought she was going. That's why I pulled you back so rough-like. But if that end had hit your head, you wouldn't have had any head at all now."

"I am very much obliged to you, Tom!" replied Jack, who was a little dazed by the suddenness with which the good old boatswain had sent him sprawling on the deck.

"Don't mention it! As the old lady said when the gent trod on her cork foot in the 'bus," answered Tom. "Now we'll have to get another hawser passed."

His whistle shrilled out, and there was a lot more flagging. The Golden Girl ceased to tug at the hawser, and a thin rope which passed between her and the liner came running home over the capstan, bringing the end of another great steel wire rope with it.

This was made fast, and the tugging began again.

The boys had had enough of watch ing wire hawsers. They walked forward to where Captain Tiddler was standing watching the gap which had been cut acros the liner's decks.

This was over two inches wide now; and across it were pasted strips of stamp-paper.

"She's on the move now, boys!" said the captain triumphantly. "The old Golden Girl shifted her exactly one inch in that last pull. Next time she'll get her on the move altogether, and as soon as you see those bits of stamp-paper part you'll know that you are each five hundred pounds in pocket, for that'll be your share of the salvage-money."

realised that money was picked up in this fashion.

Needless to say, they watched the bits of stamp-paper breathlessly.

"Now she's going! Now she's going! wexclaimed Captain Tiddler at last. "I can feel it! I can feel it!" A shiver ran through the whole fabric of the liner.

The boys saw the strips of stamp-paper snap. The gap in the deck yawned suddenly to six inches, then to a foot.

Of a sudden, the deck on which they stood slid away from the fixed portion of the ship. The Queen of Java slid slowly and magnificently back from the severed portion. A gap of twenty yards of blue seawater showed, which rapidly increased to a hundred yards. And the boys saw, left behind them on that ragged, savage ridge of rocks, the front of the ship, cut clean into floors like a house which is being demolished by the housebreakers.

Then a tremendous cheer went up from the crowded decks of the mutilated liner which had thus left nearly two hundred feet of her length behind on the Burlings.

Word came up from below that the bulkhead was holding tight and good, as the disabled liner was tugged sternforemost by the Golden Girl in the direction of the tall mountains that marked the mouth of the Tagus at Lisbon.

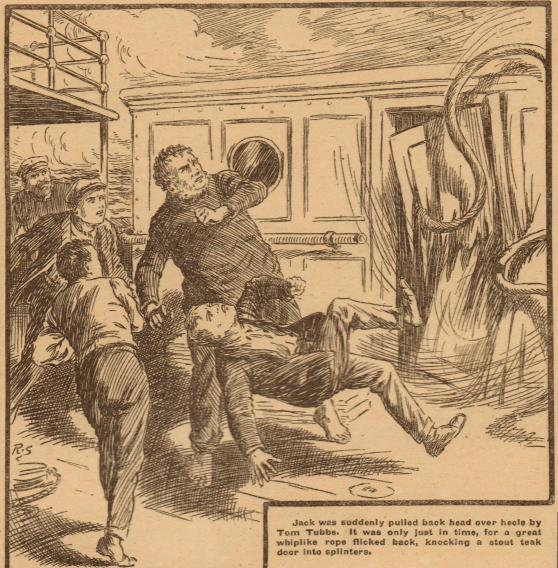
The delighted Dutchmen cheered themselves hoarse. They cheered Captain Tiddler. They cheered his crew. They cheered the divers, and they cheered the divers, and they cheered themselves. And finally they sang "God Save the King!" to the accompaniment of the ship's band, which crashed out the British National Anthem in fine style.

The boys, standing to attention, barc-headed, felt good. This was life! And they looked with grateful eyes upon the good-hearted captain who had laid the beginnings of their fortunes.

The captain clapped them on the back heartily.

"Well boys," said he, "she's as safe as houses now. In ten hours we'll be over the bar at Cascaes, and safe in the Lisbon river. And, best of all, we've cheated Davy Jones and liss pal Satan Gomez of another hundred thousand quid!"

(Another thrilling long instalment of this great adventure story in next Monday's Boys' FRIEND. Order your copy in advance to avoid disappointment.)



ing leads, were stationed all along the ship to watch the increasing depth of water, and when the firing-boxes were all ready a lull fell upon the

of water, and when the firing-boxes were all ready a lull fell upon the ship.

Half an hour was to elapse before the firing of the first charge, for the captain wished to allow an extracushion of water to gather about the stranded hull before he started the series of small explosions that would cut away the last plates that held the ship to her stranded bow.

The stern was already afloat, although the keel, forward of the engine-room, was still resting on the rocky ledge.

In the hold behind the bulkhead, which Tom Tubbs and his gang had reinforced, the whole strength of the huge centrifugal pumps had been centred. There were six of these twelve-inch pumps, which meant that, if there was a hole four feet square in the bottom of the vessel, these with their combined power, could keep the water down.

As he sat on the steps by his firing-boxes, Captain Tiddler called the boys up to him.

"Well, young gentlemen," said he, looking sharply at their pale faces.

up to him.

"Well, young gentlemen," said he, looking sharply at their pale faces, "you don't look much the better for your bathe. Has anything happened, or was last night's work too much for you?"

you?"
The boys then told him what had happened in the cove, although they did not mention Snowball's Obeah

did not mention Snowball's Obeah work.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" exclaimed the captain, when he had heard their story. "I don't wonder that you all look a bit peaked! And it was I who sent you into it. I ought to ha' known better with my experience of friend Satan. But, though I kept my eye on the Albatross all the time, and was ready to send a boat round for you in case I saw any move on his part, I clean forgot that he might do some dirty trick with that submarine. I even got so far as to think o' the submarine. But we should have seen it if the Albatross had hoisted it out. He must have come up from Lisbon, towing it alongside, on the far side of us. Well, it only shows us, boys, that we have got to look out a bit more for Satan. We'll never be able to trust him till he's dead!"

never be able to trust him till he's dead!"

The captain was for sending them all back to the Golden Girl to lie down in their bunks after the strain of their adventure.

But the boys begged hard that they might watch the final operations of the Queen of Java. So the captain contented himself by dosing them all with a stiff mixture of bromide, which he obtained from the doctor's surgery of the Dutch ship.

In the meantime the Golden Girl was shifting her position. She came astern of the stranded ship, and three huge towing hawsers were passed from her stern to the stern of the Java Queen. These were to be left slack until the mines had been exploded.

Watch in hand, the captain waited

Poloded.

Watch in hand, the captain waited for the tide, keeping an eye on the broad expanse of the Atlantic to windward. The sun was working to the westward, and there was a golden haze on the horizon, above which floated a few wisps of the streaky cloud which is known as mare-tail cloud.

cloud which is known as mare-tail cloud.

"We are going to get her off just about in time, boys!" said the captain. "By night there will be a nice fresh breeze blowing from the westward, and it doesn't take long in this water to knock up a swell that'd soon have smashed up this old hooker lying in this berth. The skipper can thank his lucky stars for a single day of flat calm and the chance of having the Golden Girl and her tool-chest by, to have saved him."

Soon the leadsmen shouted word of increased depth of water.

Captain Tiddler slipped his watch into his pocket, and moved to his first firing-box. It was a small mahogany box, from which projected a small handle like the handle of a coffee-mill. To it were led a pair of insulated wires, which were clamped in brass screws at the end of the box.

"That was the first charge," ex-plained the captain. "There are a string of thirty of 'em each side of her?"

planed the captain. "There are a string of thirty of 'em each side of her."

One by one he fired the charges methodically, first exploding on the starboard side of the ship, then on the port side.

As soon as the last of the sixty charges were fired, the boys went down into the barge alongside, and watched the divers go down below to examine and report on the result of the string of explosions which extended from the waterline down to the keel of the ship. Above the waterline a perpendicular seamed line of scorched and melted steel showed where the plates had been cut through by the intense heat of the oxygen-acetyline lamps.

Whilst the divers were down the boys had plenty of fun picking up the fish which, stunned by the explosions, had floated to the surface. There were some fine rock-bass and mullet amongst them, and they were not long in collecting enough to provide the whole ship's company of the Golden Girl with a big fish supper.

The Golden Girl was now stoking up for her towing effort. A huge pillar of black smoke was pouring out of her funnel, and a full head of

underfoot like something that floated.

There was a slight drain of swell now, setting in from the westward, and the breeze was freshening.

The liner's boats which had been launched when she had run ashore, and which had lain alongside her all day, busy carrying the precious discharged cargo of spices and cocoa beans to the shore, were hoisted up to their davits.

Later on, when opportunity offered, ships would come from Lisbon to recover the discharged cargo which was now laid up on the beach ashore, covered up snugly with boards and tarpaulin-roofs to keep it from the weather.

Mr. Tubbs, beaming all over his face, came up from his job in the hold abaft the line of division. His wonderful cofferdam of planks, and their elaborate backing of beams and girders had nobly withstood the shock of the explosions, and the separating of the ship. Not a drain of water was coming through the bulkhead, or the huge mass of timbers that backed it.

"She's as tight as a drum, as the old lady said w'en 'er little grandson filled 'isself up so tight with C'ristmas

like something that as a slight drain of swell ag in from the westward, reeze was freshening. The boats which had been when she had run ashore, had lain alongside her all carrying the precious distance of spices and cocoa he shore, were hoisted up vits.

When opportunity offered, and come from Lisbon to reischarged cargo which was up on the beach ashore, on snugly with boards and lofs to keep it from the bas, beaming all over his up from his job in the hold line of division. His cofferdam of planks, and the backing of beams and and nobly withstood the the explosions, and the line will be one too many for her yet. She's got to go whether she likes it or not."

He left Tom Tubbs in charge of the signal flags and went forward to see whether the inch-wide cut across the decks of the liner was increasing a hair's-breadth in width under the strain of the towing hawsers.

They could hear the engines of the Golden Girl throbbing as she strained and tugged at the three great hawsers which bound her to the strained and tugged at the three great hawsers which bound her to the strained and tugged at the three great hawsers which bound her to the strained and tugged at the three great hawsers which bound her to the strained and tugged at the three great hawsers which bound her to the strained and tugged at the three great hawsers which bound her to the strained the captain. "But the Golden Girl will be one too many for her yet. She's got to go whether the inch-wide cut across the decks of the liner was increasing a hair's-breadth in width under the strain of the towing hawsers.

They could hear the engines of the Golden Girl throbbing as she strained and tugged at the three great hawsers which and tugged at the three great hawsers which and tugged at the three great hawsers which and tugged at the three great hawsers.

But the Queen of Java did not move. She still lay heavy, soggy, inet, and as stolid as the Dutchmen who had put the together.

"Confound the tod Dutch bilgetank!" exclaimed the captain. "But the Golden Girl w

Tom Tubbs looked at these anxiously.

"Better look out, young gents!" said he. "We won't stand too near the ends of these hawsers. If one of 'em parted and caught one of you a clip under the ear, you wouldn't want another belt. I once saw a party cut clean in halves by a hawser going just as one of these might go. He was a married man, he was, an'.—"



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# THE 1st CHAPTER. "Smiler" Dillon.

"Smiler" Dillon.

The arrival of the American bantam-weight champion "Smiler" Dillon in Paris aroused more than ordinary interest by reason of the fact that he was unquestionably one of the best men at his weight to be found on the other side of the Atlantic, and because France possessed a sound little fighter at the same weight herself.

Jean Verlet was his name. He was a wonderful little boxer, who had achieved his position by sheer merit and pluck.

A modest little fellow, handsome as Adonis, yet without an ounce of side, he loved boxing just as fondly as his famous contemporary, Carpentier.

He never neglected his training. He did not know the meaning of the word foul. He was a chivalrous and generous opponent, yet a demon to fight when thereuply roused

word foul. He was a chivalrous and generous opponent, yet a demon to fight when thoroughly roused.

Perhaps it was because Smiler and his manager, Starkey, had struck a quiet time in the States and scented a gay time and lots of money as their reward if they invaded Europe, that they came to Paris.

And they had their eyes fixed on Jean Verlet.

They hadn't been a week in the

Jean Verlet.
They hadn't been a week in the Gay City ere they were casting their bait in the hope of catching the big

fish.

The Palace was the biggest and the best of the Paris boxing halls at that time. Run by Edouard Martel, an astute and far-seeing promoter, who believed in only staging the best contests, and hardly ever put on a tame affair, it had been a "go" from the very night it first opened its doors.

Martel had made a fortune out of it. And he was prepared to risk his money in promoting bigger contests now.

now.

Smiler Dillon, who entered the ring at Martel's Hall the night after his arrival, and was accorded a rousing reception there upon his first introduction to a French boxing audience, and his manager soon got to talking terms with Martel.

Edouard for his part sounded Verlet.

Verlet.

Jean was willing to meet the American providing he had his proper share of the purse.

One other boxer was also approached by Martel, with a view to a possible bout with Dillon. His name was Tom Belcher, and he was the wonderful little Britisher who had scored a sensational knock-out victory over Verlet.

Tom also was willing to meet the American, and neither he nor Bill

Tom also was willing to meet the American, and neither he nor Bill Rouse, who looked after Tom's interests, were inclined to shout about the price, for Tom's real worth was far from being recognised yet.

"Look here, messieurs," said Martel to Starkey and Dillon the morning after he had sounded the French and British champions, "Smiler Dillon can box either Jean Verlet or Tom Belcher over twenty rounds at my hall, under champion-ship conditions, if he likes."

"We'll write Tom Belcher out," said the American manager. "We don't know the British guy. Verlet's good enough for us."

"Belcher has beaten Verlet, and he was giving him a stone in weight," observed Martel.

Smiler smiled his best smile, and pulled heavily at a green cigar, which he had brought with him from the States.

"Guess I've seen some of them

"Guess I've seen some of them flukes brought off on my side of the

# THE BOXER'S ORDEAL!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of Thrilling Adventure, introducing

# TOM BELCHER-THE BOY BOXER BY ARTHUR S. HARDY.

Pond," said he. "Verlet is the goods. The French crowd wouldn't plank down the dough to see me cut a kid to ribbons. Let's have a match with Jean."

with Jean."

They then began to discuss terms.

Smiler wanted 10,000 dollars, and said he was giving himself away at

said he was giving himself away at the price.

Martel demanded to know whether he would like the Palace, and a chunk of Paris thrown in with it as well.

"Verlet expects to get a bit," said he, "and I don't promote boxing contests for the benefit of my health."

Then they began to wrangle. At the end of the discussion the American's demands were whittled down to 2,500 dollars.

Martel offered him £40 for the fight, take it or leave it, together with a forfeit of 500 dollars should he fail to keep faith with the public.

Smiler wouldn't think of it. Starkey was furiously indignant at what he called an insult to the finest American boxer that had ever left the States.

can boxer that had ever left the States.

There they left it.
A few days went by, during which the Yankee boxer and his adviser tested the paying quality of the other Parisian promoters.

Nothing better came their way. They decided to accept.
Result, a meeting at the Boxing Palace, whereat articles of agreement were duly drawn up and signed by the interested parties, and the word went forth that Jean Verlet, bantamweight boxing champion of France, and Smiler Dillon, bantam champion of America, were going to meet at Martel's Boxing Palace.

In a moment the Parisian boxing-world was on fire.

Next to the great Carpentier, Verlet was more idolised than any other boxer in France.

No sooner were the advertisements set upon the hoardings, and the seats offered for sale than a record rush was made to secure them.

Martel had secured another triumph.

made to secure them.

Martel had secured another triumph.

The 2nd Chapter,
Tom Belcher's New Engagement.
On the very day that Jean Verlet started training for this contest—he decided to do his work at the Boxing Palace itself, and to live in a house in Paris whilst undergoing his preparation—Tom Belcher called to say good-bye.

Dodd, the boxer, was about to return to England, and Tom was going with him. Billy Rouse, the agent, too, spoke about going to London to see whether he could find any likely talent there.

"Jean," said Tom Belcher, as he offered his hand to Verlet, "I've come to say good-bye. We've had some fine times together, and you've been a real friend to me. I should like to stay and see you box Dillon, but I have to think of my own affairs. I'm not a millionaire, and funds are very low. It's easier for me to get contests in England than it is over here."

They were standing in the deserted boxing-hall, with the empty seats all around them. The place, lit by a skylight, was full of ghostly shadows, and the ring presented a very forlorn appearance as it reared its ropes and posts high above the floor.

Jean, a rosy flush upon his cheeks, his eyes daneing with health, his lips parted in a boyish smile, seized the outstretched hand.

"What!" he cried. "You're going to leave us, Tom Belshar? Ah, that is unkind! But you shall not do it. I, Jean Verlet "—striking his chest—"will not allow it. You must stay here until after I have fought Dillon, and then we will go for a holiday tour through Normandy. We will have the time of our lives."

"A holiday tour costs money," said Tom, obliged to laugh at the note of dramatic intensity in the ring of the French boxer's voice. "And I

haven't got any. It's impossible, Jean. But I'll promise you one thing. The moment I can afford it, I'll come back, and we'll have a tour together then."

Jean Verlet turned with a comical expression of dismay on his handsome face to his new manager Henri

Pontieux.

"Listen to him!" he cried. "He says it all so glibly. Yet he knows that if he forsakes me now, I shall be of no use. This Smiler Dillon will beat me. Is it not cruel? What shall be done with him, Henri?"

Pontieux was an observant and clever man. He loved Verlet. He had managed to get the lad to accept him as his mentor after a long period of patient waiting. And his one consideration, sleeping or waking, was the welfare of the lad he loved.

Was Tom Belcher's presence necessary to Verlet? he asked himself. And as he scanned Verlet's face, and saw the anxious looks the young boxer cast at Tom, he knew it was.

"Ab year fight," he said with a

young boxer cast at Tom, he knew it was.

"Ah, my faith," he said, with a languid drawl, "I will tell you. He shall stay here. He shall become your sparring partner, and help you even as you have helped him, Jean. And if he refuses—why, we will keep him here by main force."

Billy Rouse intervened.

"Ah, but," he cried, "the kid is broke to the world. I can't afford to lend him any money. If you could pay him sufficient for his keep, why, then, he——"

Jean Verlet leaped at the sugges-

en, he——" Jean Verlet leaped at the sugges-

"Pay him to be my sparring partner?" he exclaimed. "Ah, yes, we will pay him anything he likes to ask. Is it not so, Henri, my friend?" Pontieux nodded vehemently.

ask. Is it not so, Henri, my friend?"
Pontieux nodded vehemently.
"If you want me to stop, I'll stop, Jean," said Tom. "It wouldn't cost me much to live. Say fifty francs a week—"
"Fifty francs! Fifty francs!" exclaimed the volatile French champion. "You shall have four times that amount if only you'll stay, Tom, and you shall live with Pontieux and I. We will give you a good time, but I want you to box with me, to show me your clever tricks. I want to beat Dillon, and training will be a delight if only you stand by me."
"We'll stick to the fifty francs, Jean," laughed Tom. "Billy "—to Rouse—"I'll do it!"
"Right-ho!" said the boxing agent. "I'm glad you're going to help Jean. He's the linest little fellow I've ever met, and here, I'll make a promise. I'll come back to Paris in time to see the fight. It's good-bye, then, to you as well as Jean, now, Tom. And, good-luck!"
He shook hands warmly with both of them, and then departed with Dodd.

#### The 3rd Chapter. The Warning.

The Warning.

Never had Tom Belcher seen any boxer throw himself into the arduous work of training with such zest and enthusiasm as Verlet did whilst undergoing his preparation for his match with Dillon.

As the days passed by Jean got as fit as ever a boxer could hope to be. He loved his long walks. He loved their training spins in the early mornings along the boulevards. He revelled in the shadow boxing and sparring. He was very soon down to weight, and there he remained, leaving himself nothing to do whatever during the last few days before the fight.

Pontieux was an ideal manager. He Verlet retained his strength. And on no consideration whatever would he allow the lad to be worried.

He did not always drive him to bed at an early hour. Sometimes they

sat up and played cards, if Verlet seemed to want to do so, but Pontieux took care that the boy slept later the next morning.

next morning.

On these eminently practical lines, the bantam champion of France trained for his match with perhaps the most dangerous boxer he had ever been called upon to face.

The long list of knock-out victories which stood to Smiler Dillon's credit showed that he was a boxer to be feared.

It was the day before the fight, and Verlet was resting in the empty boxing-hall prior to going through the light sparring practice set down for the afternoon, when Bob Gorringe, an old boxer of some reputation, who had been appointed to look after Verlet and the lads—a sort of trainer—came mysteriously forward, and, stopping in front of Pontieux, said:
"Might I have a word with you.

'Might I have a word with you,

sir?"
Pontieux rose.
"What is it, Bob?" he asked.
"There is a young lady outside, who says she wants to have a word with Jean," muttered Gorringe, who did not intend that Verlet should hear. "I told her that he was busy training, and couldn't be seen. Was I right?"
Variet was quick of hearing. Ho

Verlet was quick of hearing. He shot a keen glance at Gorringe, and

"Did she give any name?" asked the cautious manager.
"She said her name was Lisette,

Verlet leapt to his feet, his sensitive nostrils quivering, his eyes darting fire.
"Lisette!" he cried. "Ah, show

"Lisette!" he cried. "Ah, show her in!"

"But, Jean, my dear boy, think

"Pontieux began, deprecatingly.

"You have got—"

"Never mind!" said Verlet imperiously. "It is Lisette! She is as good as gold, though she was cruelly treated by the apache, Victor Loraine. I will see her. Show her in!"

Both Pontieux and Gorringe opened their mouths to utter further protests. Verlet, in his imperious way, waved them aside.

"Show her in!" he cried, and the

"Show her in!" he cried, and the emphatic stamp of the foot that accompanied the words showed that he would not submit to any trifling.

Pontieux signed to Gorringe to obey. The old boxer, with a shrug of his shoulders, turned and left the hall.

hall.

Tom Belcher was keenly interested.
He had twice come in contact with this French girl Lisette.

She had been his friend. To her, perhaps, he owed his life, for she had brought Verlet, Rouse, and the police to his rescue when he was in the power of the apache Victor Loraine, who was now undergoing sentence in a French prison.

He wondered what she might be wanting now.

wanting now.

A minute later Gorringe appeared. Lisette was at his heels. She was a dark-haired, dark-eibeauty, with all the grace and e of movement characteristic of French women.

She came up to Verlet, and smiled into his handsome face.

"Forgive me," she lisped.

He took her by the hand, and with a boyish laugh, asked her what it was she wanted.

"I have come to warn you to be

she wanted.

"I have come to warn you to be careful, Jean," she said. "That is all. Victor is in prison. But he has many friends in Paris, and I have heard some of them threaten to do you an injury. I don't want you to run any risks. I know nothing definite. I am only afraid, that is all."

Verlet laughed. He took her hands cried. "We and shook them warmly."



"Thanks!" he cried. "I will run no risks, I promise you! I have only one more day to go, and then I shall be through with my fight with Dillon. If there is any danger, I take it it will arise between this and the morning, eh?"

Lisette nodded.
"Yes," she said.
"But you know nothing definite—eh?"

eh?

Pontieux fixed her with his dark Pontieux fixed her with his dark eyes. He suspected everybody and anybody whom he did not know. But the girl's honest and open face, her manifest anxiety for Jean Verlet's welfare, disarmed him. He felt that she was genuine, and then, had she not proved it before?

"Thanks!" he said. "It's good of you to come, Lisette!"
She curtsied.
"Not at all, monsieur," she said.
"I would do anything for Jean. Is he not the pride of France?"
Jean blushed like a schoolboy, and laughed.

#### The 4th Charter The Face at the Window.

Jean finished his training that afternoon for good and all.

Pontieux intended that he should rest on the morrow.

The weighing-in had to be arranged for the evening, Dillon preferring it that way.

The meal was partaken of at the

The meal was partaken of at the usual hour in the evening, and the party then visited a theatre, returning home half an hour before mid-

night.

A snack and some light refreshment, and then the cards were produced and set upon a table.

Pontieux attended to the fire, drew the curtains, arranged the chairs, and he, Tom Belcher, Gorringe, and Jean Verlet sat down to play a hand of cards.

cards.

The others had gone to bed.

Verlet's spirits soared high. He was simply full of fun, and as fresh as if he had only just commenced the

The others had gone to been Verlet's spirits soared high. He was simply full of fun, and as fresh as if he had only just commenced the day's work.

"Shall I deal?" he cried.

"Please!" said Tom Belcher.

The cards flew round the table, and soon they were engaged in unravelling the intricacies of solo whist.

Pontieux liked the game; Gorringe didn't care a rap for it, banker being more to his taste, but Tom Belcher and the eager French boy were as keen as mustard

Deal followed deal, and game succeeded game. Once when Jean secured a perfect misere, he laughed aloud in his delight.

The minutes flew by. They crept into hours. Tom yawned and felt drowsy. Gorringe, bored with the game, longed for his bed.

Every now and then he flashed a glance of disapproval across the table at the inscrutable Henri Pontieux.

"Is this your idea of training?" the glances seemed to say. "You're welcome to it. I disapprove of it entirely. You mark my words, Jean Verlet will be knocked into a cocked hat when he fights Dillon to-morrow."

Pontieux caught the glances and understood.

"You don't approve, eh, friend Gorringe?" he cried.

"No, I don't!" growled the conservative British trainer.

Pontieux slapped him on the shoulder.

"We will see, eh, my friend?" he cried. "We will see, h, my friend?" he cried. "We will see, eh, my friend?" he cried.

## THE BOXER'S ORDEAL!

(Continued from the previous page.)

crossly. "Anyway, you don't catch me backing Jean against Smiler!"

"Ah!" said the imperturbable Pontieux. "That is where you are wrong, then. The Americans are ready to lay what you call—odds, isn't it?—on Dillon. We mean to snap them up. Jean will show the Americans that they have to get up very early in the morning if they want to catch him asleep—eh?"

And he chuckled gleefully.

"Oh, rats!" muttered Gorringe angrily, for he didn't like having fun poked at him. "He'd catch him now, at any rate."

at any rate."

Jean reached across for a new pack

Jean reached across for a new pack of cards.

"My deal!" he cried, and he was more excited and eager than when the game started. He was not tired. His mind was concentrated on the game. And Henri Pontieux smiled knowingly as he watched his protege.

Happy the boxer's manager whose charge is always as care-free as Jean Verlet on the night before a big fight. Presently, during a lull between the games, Tom Belcher rose and stretched himself.

He took a turn up and down the room.

He could tell, on glancing towards the window, that the moon was still shining brightly, though the dawn must be near.

He went to the window, drew the curtain back, and suddenly lifted the blind

As he did so, he saw a face at the window, a face with sunken cheeks and cruel, pursed lips, a face in which a pair of eyes burned like living fire.

Tom stood transfixed.

A cry of horror and dismay rose to his lips, but suddenly remembering Jean, he checked it.

The next moment the face had vanished.

Pontieux at that moment turned his head, and seeing Tom standing there,

Vanished.

Pontieux at that moment turned his head, and seeing Tom standing there, cried:

"Open that window, Tom, and let the fresh air in. It'll do us no harm to breath it for a minute or two."

Tom was glad of the excuse. He pushed the window open, and leant out.

Below, we the

Tom was glad of the excuse. He pushed the window open, and leant out.

Below was the yard. Leading upfrom it was a flight of iron steps. These in turn, led to a platform, or gallery, which swept past the window to a door leading to the house.

Tom searched the yard, scanned the gallery and the steps. Yet he could find no trace of any man.

He swung his leg over the sill, and dropped on to the gallery below.

"Hi! Where are you going, Belshar?" cried Verlet.

"I'm just going for a turn in the yard," answered Tom. "I'll be back by the time you've cut for partners, and dealt the cards."

Tom did not want to alarm either Verlet or Pontieux, and besides, he was not at all sure that the face he'd seen so plainly was not a vision conjured up by a tired brain.

He now went to the door leading into the house, and tried to open it. It was fast locked and bolted. Nobody had passed into the house, or left it, that much was certain.

He next went down into the yard. It was empty. The lower doors of the house were fast locked also.

The walls were high. Tom felt sure that had anybody attempted to scale them while he was watching, he would have seen them.

He could not have missed doing so, for the moon was shining straight down, and the air was almost as bright and as light as if it were day.

Convinced that he had been mistaken, he went back into the room, but before taking his place again at the card-table, took care that the windows were fast shut and bolted.

The cut for the new game had given him dummy as a partner, Gorringe having retired to bed, and Jean Verlet and his manager sat opposite to each other.

"Ah-ha!" laughed Jean Verlet, sipping a cup of hot beef-tea, which had been set beside him. "Tom, he now has the dummy for a partner, but we must beat him, Henri!"

And the game went on.

#### The 5th Chapter. Proof!

Manager Starkey, who looked after Dillon's interests, was a very cautious and far-seeing person.

He took almost as much care with Dillon's preparation for a fight as did Pontieux in respect of Verlet.

But he was more of a martinet. He drilled his man, and drilled him hard.
The night before the fight, Smiller Dillon went to bed at ten o'clock, with instructions that he was to sleep the clock round.

Now, Starkey had taken the precaution to bribe one of the lads who was helping to train Verlet.

From him he had received information to the effect that Verlet was in grand fettle.

Starkey also got to know Gorringe, and although there was nothing of the traitor about Bob, yet the latter so disapproved of the methods of training adopted by Pontieux, that he could not help denouncing them to Starkey.

For instance, he had informed Starkey that instead of going to bed

a mile out and home before going to

His amazement when he saw Starkey standing there was pro-

Starkey Starkey, with a nod and a smile. "You're out early—eh? Catching worms—what! Say, kid, how about Jean? He's snugly tucked up in bed, I'll be bound!"

snugly tucked up in bed, I'll be bound!"
Gorringe growled and frowned.
"Not him!" he cried, in a tone of deep annoyance. "I've just played my last hand of cards with 'em. They're still at it in the back room."
"I don't believe it!" said Starkey eagerly. "Show me!"
Gorringe hesitated. He knew he'd get into trouble if he were caught helping Starkey to play the spy. Still, he so wanted the American to be an eye witness of this most astounding fact that he gave way.
"Come on, then!" he cried. "But don't make a noise! You can peep in at the keyhole! I never see anything like it! Verlet was in grand shape; but they're going to chuck the match clean away! Fancy

shivers. And what amazed him was that, instead of sitting there, brooding over his chances in the fight, Jean Verlet seemed to be completely engrossed in his game of cards.

What did it mean? Had the French kid got any real chance against Dillon?

Starkey dismissed the idea with a shrug and a laugh.

"Of course not!" he said to himself. "Smiler will kill him!"

Yet, had he entered Smiler's room when he got back to the hotel, he might have found the Yankee boxer turning from side to side, his brain far too active to permit of his going to sleep, and Smiler might have told him that thus far he had not slept a wink.

All the time the American was

wink.

All the time the American was figuring out what he could do to the French champion when he got him into the ring.

Dillon, though he reckoned the result a foregone conclusion, was worrying about the fight.

Jean Verlet, engrossed in his cardplaying, didn't even give the fight a thought.

see them move, and a man leap move the room.

The dawn had almost come now. Even Jean's high spirits began to flag. His merry laughter rang less frequently.

Once he yawned and stretched.

"Feel like bed, Jean?" asked the attentive and watchful Pontieux.

In a moment the young French boxer had roused himself.

"Not yet!" he cried. "I shall feel fresh in a moment. I won't go to bed just yet. I'll turn in after breakfast, and sleep till six o'clock in the afternoon."

Pontieux nodded and smiled.

"Good boy!" said he.

He knew that Jean would be so tired when at last he set his head upon the pillow that he would be off to sleep in a flash. Then would follow forgetfulness of the trying ordeal through which he had got to pass, until it was almost time to start for the boxing hall.

Upon waking Jean would eat a light and wholesome meal, and then rest and read awhile.

Henri Pontieux hoped—nay, expected—his protege to enter the ring full of vigour and confidence, when he would have little fear as to the result.

would stray towards those curtains which he had drawn across the window, as if he half expected to see them move, and a man leap into the room.

The dawn had almost come now. Even Jean's high spirits began to flag. His merry laughter rang less frequently.

Pontieux was feeling quite wide awake. Now and then he would drink a glass of wine, and light a fresh eigarette. But his eyelids never drooped, and there he sat, a living monument of patient devotion.

Tom Belcher, on the other hand, found it a hard job to keep himself awake. And therefore perhaps he hardly paid sufficient attention to a creaking noise at the window, which made itself heard now and again above the irresponsible and lighthearted chatter of Jean Verlet.

It was not until Tom saw the window-curtains fluttering in the breeze that he suddenly started and sat bolt upright, rousing himself to the urgent need of the situation.

Somebody had opened the window which he had clesed.

Pontieux had not moved, neither had vielet.

Somebody had opened the window which he had closed.

Pontieux had not moved, neither had Verlet. Tom could have sworn that Bob Gorringe had left the room without approaching the window.

How, then, had the window been opened? It was impossible for it to have opened itself.

Even now the window did not stand wide open. Tom could see the glass shining, as the light played on it, in the gap between the curtains.

As Pontieux seized a pack of cards, and began to shuffle them prior to dealing them out again, Tom Belcher rose and took a step towards the window.

As he did so he saw the shadowy outline of a man's head and shoulders beyond the glass. Then it seemed to him that a hand was raised. He inagined he caught the glint of steel.

"Look out, Jean!" yelled Tom, and he leart between Verlet and the

him that a hand was raised. He imagined he caught the glint of steel.

"Look out, Jean!" yelled Tom, and he leapt between Verlet and the window.

As he did so a loud report rang out, mingled with the crash of shivering glass,; and as Jean Verlet and Pontieux sprang erect in their alarm. Tom Belcher threw up his arms, and tumbled backwards to the floor.

Jean; who just failed to catch him, glanced in horror towards the window. For a moment the face of a man showed itself amid the wreathing smoke, and then vanished.

"Henri," said Jean, in icy tones, as cool and as calm as if he were making a casual observation, "Lisette was right in warning me! They meant to kill me!"

Pontieux bounded past him to the window. He looked out.

He was just in time to see a man leap up the face of the wall below like a cat, swing himself over it, and vanish.

There was nobody else in sight. They had evidently only to deal with a single assassin.

Pontieux saw in a moment that it would be useless to pursue the wretch, who would be far away by the time they reached the street.

He swung round and came back into the room, to find Jean Verlet

He swung round and came back into the room, to find Jean Verlet kneeling upon the floor and supporting Tom Belcher in his arms.

Jean's face was white, his lips were trembling. There were tears in his eyes.

"Poor Tom!" he murmured.
"Poor boy! He has given his life

for me!"
Pontieux bent reverently over

Pontieux
Tom.
"Poor little chap!" he sighed.
"Next to you, Jean, I do believe I
loved him better than anybody elso
in the world!"

"Look out, Jean!" exclaimed Tom Belcher, stepping between Verlet and the window. The next moment, a loud report rang out, mingled with broken glass, and the young boxer staggered backwards.

as any self-respecting boxing cham-pion should on the night before an important fight, Jean Verlet was going to sit up and play cards till

"Nonsense!" Starkey had ejaculated incredulously
"It's a fact!" said Bob Gorringe

"It's all bunkum! Gorringe must have taken me for a fool to think he could catch me with the door of the house was thrown open, and out came Gorringe himself.

Bob intended taking a turn of half

letting the kid play cards all night! It beats everything!"

They crept into the hall and up the stairs.

Merry laughter came echoing from the card-room. Starkey applied his eye to the keyhole, and saw.

When he got into the street afterwards his face was a study.

"Well, I'm blowed!" he growled.

"Those guys have got a nerve! And Jean didn't look very bad, did he? He seemed keen, and he looks fit. Pontieux seemed happy and contented, and that Tom Belcher boy was resigned. I'd never have believed it if I hadn't seen it, Bob! Thanks for showing me!"

He pressed a gold piece into Bob's hand, and then they went along the street together.

Gorringe presently came back, and turned into bed.

Starkey went back to his hotel in a very doubtful frame of mind.

Pontieux's methods gave him the

The 6th Chapter.

A Close Shave!

As Tom Belcher went on with the game he could not help his thoughts straying every now and again to that phantom-like face which he had seen at the window a little while ago.

that phantom-like face which he had seen at the window a little while ago.

"Could he have been mistaken?" he asked himself. "Was that a man who had looked in at him through the glass, with a demoniacal expression on his face—a face which had been the face of a murderer?"

Tom thought that it was almost impossible that it could have been so, and ever and anon he dismissed the subject from his mind, and tried to concentrate his thoughts on the game with the wholeheartedness which Jean Verlet displayed.

But he did not succeed. Much as he liked a game of solo whist, Tom could not make a business of it.

And between the hands his eyes

# THE BOXER'S ORDEAL!

Published Every Monday

(Continued from the previous page.)

Tom's eyes were closed, his mouth was open, his face was white, and he seemed to have collapsed utterly.

There was a hole in his coat, which the bullet had made.

It must have gone clean through him and killed him instantly, both men thought.

Pontieux joined Jean on his knees.
He stretched out his hand to feel
Tom's heart, and, to his amazement,
found it beating regularly.
He sucked in a deep breath, and
then raised a pair of startled eyes
to Jean

then ra-to Jean.

Boy," said he, "Tom's not dead! He's

Jean's face coloured hotly, then went white again.

"It's not possible!" he murmured.

"It's a fact, Jean!" said Pontieux gravely. Then it struck him as being a remarkable thing that there was no blood on Tom's clothing.

He was trying to make the said of the s was no blood on Tom's clothing.

He was trying to puzzle out why
this should be so when suddenly Tom
opened his eyes, and with a show
of strength that was positively amazing for a lad who had apparently
been badly hurt, he struggled up.

He even smiled as he looked at
Verlet.

He even smiled as he looked at Verlet.

"By George, that was a close shave! Wasn't it, Jean?" he cried.

"I don't know why the bullet should have floored me like that! Something scemed to be driven right into my body, and it aches badly; but I—I don't think I'm badly wounded!"

He put his hand over the place where he had been hurt, and as he did so he gave vent to a cry of joy.

The next moment he whipped into ciew a gunmetal cigarette case, which had been twisted into a fanciful shape by the force with which the bullet had struck it.

had been twisted into a fanciful shape by the force with which the bullet had struck it.

And there was the bullet snugly embedded in the metal.

Tom had this case set in the left-breast-pocket of his waistcoat over the region of his heart, and it was to this fact undoubtedly that he owed his life.

He now rose to his feet, and a minute or so later was himself again.

And then, whilst the astonished Pontieux and the no less startled Jean Verlet listened, Tom Belcher told them about the face he had seen at the window, and explained how his watchfulness alone had resulted in the saving of Verlet's life.

Jean looked at Tom, with a soft smile on his lips.

It was impossible, on seeing that tender expression, to believe that he was capable of fighting fiercely and remorselessly in the ring.

Dillon never allowed himself to indulge in such fits of tenderness as Jean Verlet was capable of displaying; and yet he was not one whit more resolute than the handsome French boy.

"Tom," said Jean, "what would I do without you? I owe you my life now. How can I ever repay you for what you've done for me?"

Tom, shaking himself, smiled.

"Wait a bit!" he said. "I was heavily in your debt, you must remember, before this happened tonight. You saved me from Victor consine, the terror of Paris. I've only repaid a little of what I owe you, Jean!"

"I don't know," said Verlet. "It would have been all up with me if

you, Jean!"

"I don't know," said Verlet. "It would have been all up with me if you hadn't stopped the bullet, Tom."

"What I want," cried Pontieux, "is to get hold of the man who fired the shot!"

"That you'll never do!" said Jean.
"He's miles away by this time. And
the worst of it is that it's interrupted
our game!"
Tom, who was rapidly throwing off

the effects of his tumble, looked up from a close examination of the cigarette case which had saved his

from a close examination of the cigarette case which had saved his life.

"The day is only just dawning. We've a long time to go till breakfast. I'm willing to go on."

But the firing of that shot, and the nearly fatal termination to their friendly game, had robbed even Verlet of his appetite for the cards.

He stretched and yawned.

"I vote," said he, "that as all the rest of the boys are still sleeping soundly, and nobody seems to have been awakened by the echo of that shot, we go to the kitchen, cook our own breakfast, eat it, and then turn in I shall have a few more hours' sleep, that is all, and as my nerves have been shaken up a bit by that villain, I really feel as if I can do with it."

"I'm jolly sure I can, Jean," re-

villain, I really feel as if I can do with it."

"I'm jolly sure I can, Jean," returned Tom, with a smile. "I tell you when I walked over to the window and saw that man's evil face glued to the glass, it gave me quite a shock. Where the rascal can have hidden himself when I searched the yard I don't know."

"He can climb like a cat," said Pontieux. "Did you see the way he clambered over the wall? I expected he swung himself up and hid himself on the other side, and waited his chance. It was a close call. It wasn't his fault the scoundrel failed."

The manager went to the window and closed it. He swung the shutters into position, and set the bar across.

And then as they were only too.

And then, as they were only too willing to leave the room, he led the way to the kitchen, whence presently emanated a fragrant and delicious odour of broiling bacon and sizzling eggs, and the penetrating and satisfying odour of boiling coffee.

And what a breakfast they are to be sure!

fying odour of boiling coffee.

And what a breakfast they ate to be sure!

They did ample justice to the meal, and afterwards the whole lot of them retired to rest, Pontieux leaving word that Jean was not to be disturbed on any account.

To make doubly sure the good fellow carried a heavy armchair up into the corridor and dumped it down outside Jean Verlet's door. He stretched himself out in it, he covered himself over with a couple of blankets, set his feet up on a smaller chair, and, excluding all draught, soon settled down with a choice cigar between his lips to waft until the boys were up and about ready to relieve him of his watch.

Jean was as safe as if he were in the Bank of England strong-rooms. No Apache could get at him there without passing over Pontieux's dead body first,

#### The 7th Chapter, The Glove Contest.

The 7th Chapter.
The Glove Contest.
During the morning and afternoon of the day of the fight all sorts of rumours were flying about Paris.
Some were to the effect that Jean Verlet had been assassinated. Others that he had been dangerously wounded, and would never make his appearance in a boxing-ring again.
"Boxing Champion Shot!" ran the placards which the newsvendors displayed in the streets. "Serious Accident to Jean Verlet!"
And the papers sold like hot cakes. Was it or was it not the truth?
Manager Starkey no sooner heard of it than he hurried round to Verlet's lodgings to learn the truth.
He found a tremendous crowd outside, kept in order by the police.
After considerable difficulty, he managed to force his way through and gain the door.
Here he saw a bulletin nailed up.
What did it say? Starkey eagerly devoured the notice with his eyes:
"RUMOURED ACCI-

"RUMOURED DENT TO VERLET!

"The champion was shot, but luckily escaped jury. He is resting injury.

"HENRI PONTIEUX."

Starkey was relieved, and satisfied. He was glad that Verlet had not been shot, for now the match fixed for that night would come off.

He went back home smiling, to find Dillon up and at breakfast.

Dillon's eyes were dull, and his cheeks were white beneath the tan. He seemed in an intensely irritable mood, too.

The fact of the matter was he had passed a wretched night, and his nerves were now so completely upset as to render rest an impossibility.

However, he ate well, which was not a bad sign. He'd heard the news from one of his sparring partners.

"Here, Starkey." he exclaimed, "what's this about Jean Verlet? You've been to inquire, haven't you? Is it true that he's been shot?"

"I don't know. I couldn't see Gorringe. Nobody would answer the door. The police had orders to keep inquirers away. But they say he was shot at, but is resting now."

Smiler's smile, which had been absent ever since he got up that morning, came back with a vengeance. He grinned his head nearly off.

"My!" he cried. "And on the

geance. He grinned ....
off.

"My!" he cried. "And on the
night before a big fight—eh? It
must have scared the kid. And these
Frenchies can't stand anything of
that sort. His nerves must be all

"Guess they are, Smiler!" said Starkey. "I'll go and see Bob Gor-ringe later in the day, and get the full account from him. But there's one thing quite certain—that you'll have no trouble in beating him now."

"Guess I oughtn't to have!" smiled Smiler. "I wonder does he feel like playin' kyards now?"

And dismissing the fears which had been haunting him for hours, he became the old, confident Smiler became the old, confident sinner Dillon once more. Starkey felt certain then that his lad was going to win.

Later in the afternoon Starkey went along to pay a friendly call on Gorringe. He'd no compunction in showing himself in the rival camp, for he meant no harm.

Only a few curiosity-mongers were hanging about the house then. A fresh bulletin was up. It said that Jean Verlet was in the best of health, and would fight that night.

"How is the kid?" asked Starkey, when he met Gorringe.

"Oh, he's in bed!" said Gorringe, who, as a matter of fact, hadn't even seen Jean.

"Bad?"

"Don't think so."

"Tell me all about the shooting," said Starkey.

Gorringe, as we know, hadn't seen it, but he gave a fairly accurate account of what had happened.

"The cigarette-case which Verlet gave Tom Belcher a month ago, as a matter of fact, stopped the bullet and saved Belcher's life, and Belcher, getting between Verlet and the window, saved Jean."

"The kid's nerve is all shaken up, I suppose?" said Starkey, with an anticipatory smile.

"That I can't say. I only know

I suppose?" said Starkey, with an anticipatory smile.
"That I can't say. I only know he's sound asleep, and they don't intend to wake him until six o'clock tonight."

tend to wake him until six o'clock to-night."

Starkey winked.

"He's resting uneasy like, I'll bet a dollar," said he. "One couldn't expect it otherwise. Well, I'm glad he's not been hurt, Bob, for I shouldn't have liked anything to interfere with the fight to-night."

And Starkey took his leave. The report he rendered to Dillon sent the latter into a paroxysm of delight.

"He's as good as beat, Starkey," said he. "His nerves must be all shaken up. It stands to commonsense and reason. And that must tell. He'll be afraid all the time that his enemy will be inside the boxing-hall, ready to take a pot-shot at him in the ring. It'll make things easy for me."

And Smiler smiled and smiled and

for me."

And Smiler smiled and smiled and

smiled. He was happy in the assurance of victory.

That night the Boxing Palace was packed—packed to overflowing. In spite of the municipal regulations there were hundreds of spectators standing in the gangways, and at the end of the hall.

The crush outside the building was tremendous. Never had a bigger crowd collected to see a boxing contest, or to await the verdict outside the hall, not even on a Carpentier night.

the hall, not even on a Carpentier night.

When Dillon arrived with his manager he received a tremendous ovation. His confidence increased.

He went to his dressing-room, changed, and then passed on to a room set apart for the weighing-in ceremony.

In the presence of the judges, referee, promoter, timekeeper, and Henri Pontieux, the Yankee boxer stepped on to the scales.

There was no forfeit. He made the weight easily enough. He looked wonderfully well, and his smile was broad. "Where's Verlet?" inquired

"Where's Verlet?" inquired Starkey impatiently, when Dillon had slipped into his dressing gown. "He ought not to keep us waiting. He ought to be here."

And then Verlet appeared. He was in the room and on the scales before Dillon and his manager could realise the fact.

He also did the weight easily.

And how bonnie he looked as, with a bright smile on his face, he leapt down, shook the hands that were outstretched to him in congratulation, and then pushed Tom Belcher forward as the lad who had saved his life.

life. Smiler Dillon stared at his opponent in blank amazement. If he were suffering from shaken nerves he most skilfully concealed the fact.

His face was bright, his eyes danced with health and good-nature. His lips were parted in a charming smile, exhibiting the white teeth beyond.

And when he came up to Dillon and gracefully expressed the wish that they would have a friendly fight, Smiler lost his smile.

He was utterly disconcerted by the naturalness and fine sportsmanship of Jean Verlet.

And he didn't know what sort of a man he'd got to meet.

. . .

Jean was the first to enter the ring when the call came, and in his corner were his French friends, Gorringe, Henri Pontieux, and Tom Belcher. His reception was magnificent.

And there he waited, completely at his ease, fearless, and as fresh as a daisy.

And there he waited, completely at his ease, fearless, and as fresh as a daisy.

Smiler kept him waiting, and after he entered the ring started a wrangle, first about the bandages, which Verlet removed. Next about the boxing-gloves, which had to be changed.

If he hoped to put Verlet out of humour he failed utterly, and as his plans missed fire, so he became nervous and disgrantled himself.

And so, when the fight began he was cautious and hung back, while Jean Verlet, full of life and fire, took up the running, and bustled his man all over the ring.

The Frenchman led with his left, then, dodging a counter, he brought the right home on the jaw. Smiler made a poor response; he did not seem capable of getting in an effective blow.

He had hoped to disconcert his opponent by objecting to his bandages, but his efforts had proved a complete failure. It was he who was the more disconcerted.

Round the ring he went, Verlet following sharp upon him, landing a telling blow here and an effective punch there. Smiler was getting all the knocks, and he was really thankful when the gong sounded the end of the first round. It gave him time to recover his composure. He realised that he had a stiffer task before him than he had imagined, and he made up his mind to steel himself to it.

In the second round he stood well up to his opponent. Jean Verlet

himself to it.

In the second round he stood well up to his opponent. Jean Verlet attempted to adopt his tactics of the previous round, but he soon saw that they would not pay. Smiler had pulled himself together, and he was not likely to repeat his antics of round one. Still, although he put up a much better show, Verlet had very little difficulty in gathering in the points.

points.

The French boy took the honours in the third and fourth rounds, and in the fifth, when Dillon, realising that he had no chance at boxing, went in for hard fighting, the French lad accepted the challenge, and they slammed and banged away at each other until both had been severely punished.

Verlet then proved what an amazingly-improved in-fighter he

Verlet then proved what amazingly-improved in-fighter

amazingly-improved m-lighter ne was.

Tom Belcher's lesson had made him invulnerable, even as Tom's cigarette-case had saved his life.

Dillon fought an up-hill fight gallantly until the ninth round, and then was knocked clean out of time by a lightning drive on the mark.

"Smiler, old pal," said Starkey dejectedly an hour later, "it seems to me this European trip ain't going to pan out right. Guess we'll take the next boat home!"

#### THE END.

(Next Monday's grand long com plete tale of Tom Belcher is entitled "The Boxing Impostor!" Don't miss this grand yarn.)

## DO YOU KNOW THAT\_

British people use 20,000,000 pins a

Everyone in this country spends on an average two shillings a year on oranges?

The sweetening power of sycose is 0 times greater than that of sugar?

Infectious diseases are unknown in Greenland on account of the dry, cold atmosphere?

Men over forty are practically proof against enteric fever?

Neither Nelson nor Napoleon ever saw a gas lamp?

Water covers 72 per cent. of the surface of our globe?

Snow is the best preservative for plants against frost?

There are seventeen cities in the world with a population of over a million?

Less than a thousand Victoria Crosses have been awarded since they were first fashioned in 1856? The area of Montenegro, our smallest ally, is about 5,603 square miles?

Salt is a government monopoly in Italy?

In Japanese houses chairs and tables are quite unknown?

In 1863 Prussia assisted Russia in suppressing a Polish revolution? The Empire of Japan consists about 4,000 islands, and has a to area of about 260,000 square miles?

Our Navy is the only navy that had practised firing at submarines before the war?

A single projectile from a fifteen-inch naval gun weighs 1,950lb.?

Winkles eat oysters?

Pommican, the staple food of Arctic explorers, is made from the flesh and fat of bisons?

Henry VIII was the first English overeign to be styled "His sovereign to Majesty "?

It was Carlyle who originated the phrase "the unspeakable Turk"?

Women's hearts beat faster than those of men?

In Seville the night police are armed with long spears, such as the knights of old used?

In winter the rise of the barometer is a sign of frost? There are no paupers, and scarcely any multi-millionaires in France?

In Italy legal charity, the right of the poor to be supported by the parish, does not exist?

In Brazil there is no middle-class,

No license is required for dogs under six months old? Granite is the lowest rock in the earth's crust?

In blast furnaces in which cast-iron is made the fires burn for years without ever going out?

The Kaiser is entitled to wear the uniform of any regiment in the German Army?

The railway platform at Cambridge station is said to be the longest in the world?

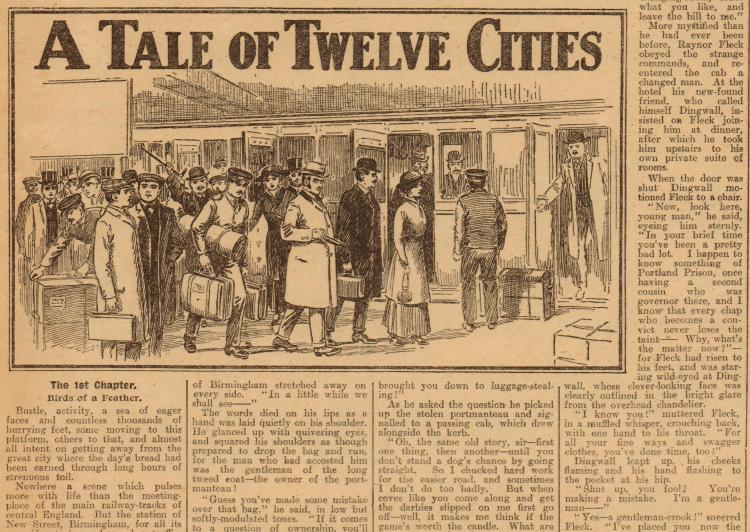
During our wars with Napoleon our Navy captured or destroyed 638 Navy captured French ships?

By far the greater portion of the earth's land surface is covered with growing vegetation?

Damascus, in Syria, is the oldest all existing cities?



# A GRAND NEW SERIA By Famous MAURICE EVERARD JUST STARTING!



The 1st Chapter. Birds of a Feather.

The 1st Chapter.

Birds of a Feather.

Bustle, activity, a sea of eager faces and countless thousands of hurrying feet, some moving to this platform, others to that, and almost all intent on getting away from the great city where the day's bread had been earned through long hours of strenuous toil.

Nowhere a scene which pulses more with life than the meeting-place of the main railway-tracks of central England. But the station of New Street, Birmingham, for all its magnificent size and ceaseless traffic, is hardly the spot one would choose to linger on with a slatter of cold rain turning the pavements outside to oily, shining slabs under the gaslamps, and a chill wind blowing that easily puts to silence the sonorously-musical chimes of St. Martin's bell-tower not so very far away.

The tall young man in the shabby thin suit, minus an overcoat, turned up his collar, and, with hands deep in pockets, slouched moodily away from the main-line platform, where station officials and possibly plain-clothes' detectives are always too plentiful for one of his calling; and moved with ever-watchful eye in the direction of the branch line which runs through Monument Station to the Rotton Park district of Edgbaston and to Harborne.

"Oughter be somethink doin' there!" he muttered, laughing dejectedly to himself, as he kept well among a press of prosperous city men on their way home for the night. Most of them carried interest looking attache cases, and not a few promising gladstones and leather hand-trunks.

Arrived at his destination, he drew to a halt in the dark shadow cast by an overhead standard, and watched, with hungry eyes, the kaleidoscopic throng. His face was good to look upon, despite the hollowness of the cheeks, and the drooping lines of care about the eyes and tightly-compresed lips.

"I'm hungry, and I'm cold, and poor—while money lies about on

about the eyes and tightly-compresed lips.

"I'm hungry, and I'm cold, and poor—while money lies about on every side," he might have told himself, as he kept an alert watch on a well-dressed fellow who just then deposited a brand-new dress-case within a stone's throw of him. "I might lift that bit of goods—perhaps containing a wad of Lady Godiva's—but it's too smart. Ah, this looks more about my mark."—as an exceedingly tall man warmly clad in a long tweed greatcoat deposited a small but bulky portmanteau on the platform and moved a dozen yards or more away in search of a porter. Anyway, the watcher made short work of his chance, for, walking briskly forward, he picked up the portmanteau with the utmost unconcern and moved leisurely off.

"Something like business," he reflected, with a self-satisfied smile when the station was well cleared and the spacious streets of the heart about the eyes and tightly-compressed lips.

"I'm hungry, and I'm cold, and poor—while money lies about on every side," he might have told himself, as he kept an alert watch on a well-dressed fellow who just then deposited a brand-new dress-case within a stone's throw of him. "I might lift that bit of goods—perhaps containing a wad of Lady Godiva's—but it's too smart. Ah, this looks more about my mark "—as an exceedingly tall man warmly clad in a long tweed greatcoat deposited a small but bulky portmanteau on the platform and moved a dozen yards or more away in search of a porter. Anyway, the watcher made short work of his chance, for, walking briskly forward, he picked up the portmanteau with the utmost unconcern and moved leisurely off.
"Something like business." he

of Birmingham stretched away on every side. "In a little while we shall see—."

shall see—"
The words died on his lips as a hand was laid quietly on his shoulder. He glanced up with quivering eyes, and squared his shoulders as though prepared to drop the bag and run, for the man who had accosted him was the gentleman of the long tweed coat—the owner of the portmanteau!

manteau!

"Guess you've made some mistake over that bag," he said, in low but softly-modulated tones. "If it comes to a question of ownership, you'll findy ourself on shaky ground."

The young fellow started guiltily. "Oh! Is it yours? I thought it was mine!" he mumbled apologetically.

The other smiled.

"A most convenient mistake recovered."

The other smiled.

"A most convenient mistake, my friend—for you. But, you see, I happen to have spotted you just as you darted away in the direction of the street. You're a luggage-thief, and I happen to have caught you red-handed. Put the bag down and listen. On the island, in the middle of the road, stand a couple of policemen. Forty yards away is another; at the end of Corporation Street a fourth; a fifth by New Street Corner, and yet one more by High Street. Result, directly I call you are surrounded."

A pitiful whine broke from the

rounded."

A pitiful whine broke from the wretched fellow.

"Don't be hard, guv'nor! I'm starving, fair starving—that's what I am. If you nark me over this biz, I go down for a long stretch—three years' penal for sure. Give us a chance!"

The man with the moustache toyed with it thoughtfully, the while his keen eyes watched the pinched face. "What sort of a chance?" he asked

"Anything; it don't matter what, so long as I can turn a humble monarch. Like you, I've got to live."

brought you down to luggage-stealing??

As he asked the question he picked up the stolen portmanteau and signalled to a passing cab, which drew alongside the kerb.

"Oh, the same old story, sir—first one thing, then another—until you don't stand a dog's chance by going straight. So I chucked hard work for the easier road, and sometimes I don't do too badly. But when coves like you come along and get the darbies slipped on me first go off—well, it makes me think if the game's worth the candle. What are you going to do—give me up, or let me go?"
"Neither!" came the laconic reply "Neither!" came the laconic reply

"Six times. Three short, one year's hard, and two years at Portland, and I don't want to go back, give you my — Richard the Third!"

Third!"

The stranger laughed.

"I should say not. Then don't forget what I'm doing for you—saving you from a pretty stiff sentence."

"Why are you doing it?" inquired the young man suspiciously.

"Because I need

y oung man suspiciously.

"Because I need someone who will be useful to me—a fellow who knows his business, and possesses just the iron nerve and quick hand which you do. Fleck, I like you, and we're going to do good business together. We're stopping at a shop in Colmore Row, where you can hop out and buy a suit of ready-mades and a good overcoat, to say nothing of a box of collars, some ties, a bowler-hat, and a new pair of boots. Then you'll be in a fit state to accompany me town batel?"

dropped from the skies!" he laughed.

dropped from the skies!" he laughed.

"Not much, my friend; but a very keen business gentleman who reckons to see good interest back for his money. Here's the store; get right along into the changing-room, order what you like, and leave the bill to me."

More mystified than he had ever been before, Raynor Fleck obeyed the strange commands, and reentered the cab a changed man. At the hotel his new-found friend, who called himself Dingwall, insisted on Fleck joining him at dinner, after which he took him upstairs to his own private suite of rooms.

When the door was shut Dingwall mo-

man—"
"Yes—a gentleman-crook!" sneered
Fleck. "I've placed you now the
light has given me a good look at
your chivvy. You're Dacre Howard,
alias Blueflash Peter, and you was
in for five years for jewel theft; let
out in June, 1912. So you would put

me away, round on a pal of the craft, would you, Howard? Fancy getting poor Fleck nabbed for three years for pinching a fellow-crook's bag of tools! Oh, I know why the bag was heavy, Peter; you've got irons in there!"

Dingwall flopped back, and forced a smile.

"Sit down. I haven't time to quarrel," he muttered, producing a cigar-case and handing the other a weed. "I'm not going to deny what you say—"

"Because For can't I was they

quarrel," he muttered, producing a cigar-case and handing the other a weed. "I'm not going to deny what you say—"

"Because you can't. I was there, working in No. 16 Squad, while you were in No. 9, Dacre Howard—otherwise, Convict 64 A. Oh, yes, I remember you quite well!"

Dingwall lit a match.

"Shut up! I want to talk business. You can be useful to me—mighty useful. And there'll be bagfuls of money if only you play the game. I've got business on in Birmingham. A pal, Rust Jacobs, was to have come in, but he's turned out dud—got himself pinched in Huddersfield last night for ticker-lifting. Result, I'm minus a hand. Fleck, you're about to supply the deficiency."

Fleck blew smoke rings and yawned.

"Mighty good of you, Mr. Dingwall! But where do I come in, and what's the business?"

Dingwall drew his chair closer.

"D'you happen to know anything about precious stones?" he asked, in a low voice.

A laugh escaped the younger man.

"I should shay sho!" he said mirthfully. "Just try a couple of barnaeles on me. That little bit of a sparkler you're wearing in your tie—it's a Rio blue-water stone, and would sell in the St. Paul's quarter of the town at from seventy-five to eighty sovereigns. I know, 'cos once I was assistant to a Dutch Jew merchant in Hatton Garden. I had to leave him; my fingers grew sticky, and somehow the stones used to stick to them. Well, Mr. Dingwall, go on."

Dingwall sat up as though someone had poked him in the back.

"You're a judge of diamonds?" he asked, with a quick intake of breath. "That alters my programme altogether. At first I wanted you for something quite different; if you can tell the worth of gems there's far better game worth flying for."

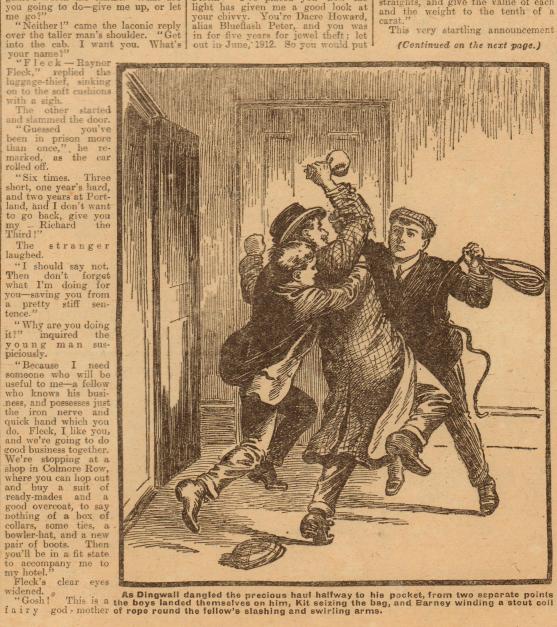
Fleck smiled behind his hand.

"Lay out a tray of mixed stuff. I'll sort out the duds from the straights, and give the value of each and the weight to the tenth of a carat."

This very startling announcement (Continued on the next page.)

carat."
This very startling announcement

(Continued on the next page.)



# A TALE OF TWELVE CITIES!

Published Every Monday

## By MAURICE EVERARD.

(Continued from the previous page.)

brought Dingwall to the back of | Fleck's chair

Fleck's chair.

"What d'you think of those?" he said, opening a case and putting into the younger man's hands a couple of pearls the size of a woman's fingernail.

nail.

Fieck held them to the light.

"Black pearls, from the Andaman Islands. One a trifle faulty, or the pair would be worth a couple of thousand pounds. Where did you get them?"

pair would be worth a couple of thousand pounds. Where did you get them?"

"Never mind," Dingwall answered.
"They're mine. I want to sell them to a certain man. Your job is to offer them. The man won't buy."

"Then why offer them?"

"To get in touch with him."

"What's his name?"

"Van Zuyder."

"Nationality?"

"A Dutchman, from Amsterdam. He's senior partner and seller for the firm of Van Zuyder, Frammerlee, and Vorten. Van Zuyder wouldn't do business with me. He knows Mr. Dingwall, alias Blueflash Peter, etc. But you're straight, Mr. Fleck; a new-comer to Birmingham—straight as a die, with something good to sell.

"You have four days in which to perfect your arrangements, in conjunction with me. Van Zuyder arrives on Friday. You will shadow him from the moment of his arrival. He is bringing over tens of thousands of pounds' worth of precious stones, which he wants to sell, and to sell quickly and well. You will get into touch with him at the diamond-dealers' meeting-place in Ludgate Hill, show him your pearls, try to get him to buy them—"

"For how much?"

him to buy them—"
"For how much?"
"A sum considerably above their

"A sum considerably above their value."

"Which he'll refuse to give."

"Of course. All the same, he'll be interested in you because you possess such very fine specimens. And you, Fleck, must be interested in him. He'll talk of diamonds, tell you he wants to sell some; and sapphires and rubies besides. Well, you are a buyer—you and your partner, who have offices in George Street. If Mr. van Zuyder will bring his stones along you and your partner will be pleased to see them and to make an offer for anything which appeals to you."

Fleck's eyes were shining.
"And what next?" he asked "And

"And what next?" he asked huskily.

"Your office will be a well-furnished room." Dingwall continued.

"To-morrow morning you shall see it. Against a partition, on the other side of which is a landing leading to the stairs, a table—a very small table—will be set. At that table you and Mr. Van Zuyder will sit to do business, your partner having, unfortunately, not turned up. Van Zuyder will produce a wallet containing a fortune in gems. As any man would, he will place the wallet down on the table in full view of you both."

"Go on. What must I do?"

"Suddenly you will start up and point towards the door, to which Van Zuyder's back will be turned. He will swivel round; you step to the door, open it, and find no one there. You have made a mistake, that is all. When you get back to the table Van Zuyder will meet you with the astounding news that the diamonds and sapplaires have disappeared."

Van Zuyder will meet you with the astounding news that the diamonds and sapplaires have disappeared."

Fleek sprang to his feet, very white in the electric glare.

"Good heavens, Dingwall! What d'you think is going to happen to me?"

d'you think is going to happen to me?"

"Nothing!" returned Dingwall easily. "You haven't stolen the diamonds, so you're quite safe. You weren't at the table when they vanished, you were standing by the door on the far side of the office."

"Then how will they vanish? And who will get them if no one but Van Zuyder and myself are present?"

"How they will vanish doesn't concern you, my friend; but I shall get them. And later you'll receive your share of the spoil."

Fleck's clear eyes flashed.

"What guarantee have I got you won't let me down?"

"The two real pearls—worth, on your own valuation, almost a couple of thousand. Even if I decamped with the whole of Van Zuyder's

stones, which I don't propose to do, you'll have been pretty well paid for your job. Now then, Fleck, what's it to be—three years' penal for luggage-stealing, or a stretch of luxury as a result of your share in the great and mysterious Birmingham jewel robbery?"

and mysterious Birmingham jewerobbery?"

The younger man was silent minute. Then he threw back his well shaped head and laughed outright.
"I opine, Dingwall, I'm in wit you up to the hilt on Van Zuyder' jewels."

The 2nd Chapter. Kit and Barney Receive the Shock of Their Lives.

It was a Thursday afternoon, and the spell of cold, wet weather, of which Birmingham receives perhaps more than her just share, had not yet broken up. If anything, one found it colder indoors than out; but Garnett Bell had insisted on a big fire being built in the private sitting-room which he had engaged for himself and the boys, and around this, an hour after lunch, found them still busily engaged.

"Now," said Garnett Bell, "I am engaged on one of the biggest cases which I, or any other detective, has ever been up against. As a matter of fact, I want to snatch a big victory out of the hands of the police, because I'm afraid, if I don't do it, they'll miss the opportunity. Of course, you read the daily papers?"

"Wo've seen the 'Daily Gazette,' 'Post and Mail,' the 'Evening Dispatch,' 'Weekly Murcury,' and 'Weekly Post.'"

"Has anything special attracted your notice?"

"Yes, the reports of the several thefts from gold and silversmiths' shops, and a couple of jewel robberies. Not in a single case have the criminals been caught."

"Good! I'm glad you chaps are beginning to notice things. A little while ago, you were each apt to jump

been caught."

"Good! I'm glad you chaps are beginning to notice things. A little while ago, you were each apt to jump to false conclusions, in the belief that you were building up sound cases. Mind, I'm not blaming or finding fault with you. You're both very young, and though you're big and strong as most men, the majority of young fellows of your age are still at school.

and strong as most men, the majority of young fellows of your age are still at school.

"But, to get back to our muttons; you've hit on the very notion which gave me my first clue when I was asked to take on this case. The fact that no single capture has been made points to the existence either of a small but highly-trained gang, or of one master-criminal who is responsible for all the robberies."

"And you intend finding out who the man is?" Kit rejoined.

A laugh escaped Bell.

"Not at all! I know, and the police suspect. But the difficulty is, we can't catch the gentleman redhanded. Suspicion is no earthly good, unless you can back it up with unquestionable proof. Up to the present, although both the authorities and myself are tolerably satisfied as to the thief's identity, we haven't been able to catch him at any of his games, so robbery has succeeded robbery, and still he goes scot-free."

"Then you'll soon be giving Brummagem the go-by?" said Barney.

Bell looked surprised.

"A detective never takes that point of view, Irish," he admonished. "We leave the city when the job is done, that is to say, sometime on Saturday."

A gasp of amaze left the youth.

"You're quite sure of netting him, then?" Kit questioned seriously.

"Quite sure!" replied Bell, lighting a cigarette. "We shall have him by Friday morning, or Friday afternoon—take him absolutely red-handed."

Barney heaved himself out of the easy-chair, and looked eager.

"Do we come in?"

"You do, my boy," was the detective's prompt answer. "You come in very much; in fact, you will both begin to start on the serious part of your training. As you've made up your minds to be detectives, you've got to tackle the job in real earnest. To-morrow I'm going to leave you to tackle a really desperate scoundrel. This is the fellow I want you to down. Take a good look at him."

With that, he drew a carte de visite photograph from his pocket-case, and laid it on the table. Barney and Kit studied it attentively.

"Where do we go, sir?" asked Barney.

Bell drew out a street plan.

"This is the St. Dan"

"Where do we go, sir?" asked Barney.

Bell drew out a street plan.
"This is the St. Paul's quarter, to the north-west of New Street, and just beyond the Great Western Railway station. It's the quarter where most of the robberies have been committed, and where nearly all the men engaged in the Birmingham jewellery and gold and silver trade have their head-quarters. I want you to go to this number in George Street, soon after nine to-morrow morning. You'll see a brown-painted door numbered 86. It will be closed, but not locked. Open it, and go inside."

"How long do you want us to wait?"
"Until this man appears."

"How long do you want us to wait?"

"Until this man appears."

"But suppose he sees us?"

"He won't, because you've got to hide yourselves, each in a cupboard, of which there are two on the first-floor landing. Those cupboards have already been supplied with peepholes, through which you can plainly see all that takes place. Some time during the morning, this man, who calls himself Dingwall, will arrive. He will come very quietly up the stairs—so quietly that you won't hear him."

"What'll he do when he reaches the landing?" Barney queried.

"Stand immediately in front of a panelled partition. Suddenly, at a sign, which will come from an inner room—an office on the other side of the partition—he will touch a spring, the panel will slide noiselessly back. Then his hand will dart in and seize a small pocket-case, purse, or wallet—I can't for certain say which—and as that wallet or purse will contain precious stones to the worth of many thousands of pounds, you've got to get it away from him."

Kit thrilled.

"Never fear; there'll be no mistake. We shall just spring out on

Kit thrilled.

"Never fear; there'll be no mistake. We shall just spring out on him and bear him to the ground—"

"I don't care what you do, so long as one of you makes sure of getting possession of the jewels, while the other ties the rascal up with a length of rope which he'll find in the cupboard."

"And what the ""

And what then?"

"And what then?"

"Then the one who has the jewels must bring them back here and lock them up in that safe, retaining the key till I ask for it. Now, boys, I've got to run off. You know what I expect of you. As you value my good opinion, don't fail!"

"We'll not fail!" Barney sang out.

The 3rd Chapter. The Biggest Surprise of All,

The appointed time arrived, and found Kit Hampton and Barney Martin at their respective stations. The stairs, they discovered on making a preliminary examination, formed evidently a secondary means of entrance, and exit from an insignificant set of offices on the second and third floors.

floors.

The place was dark and silent as the grave when the two chums took up

The place was dark and silent as the grave when the two chums took up their positions.

The time dragged very heavily for the boy detectives, and a score of times the temptation came over each to relieve the monotony-by a swift exchange of ideas.

At last, however, their quietness was in part rewarded by the slamming of a heavy door a little way down the street, and the noise of footsteps mounting a rear flight of stairs, after which a door must have opened on the far side of the partition across the landing, because quite plainly they caught the faint murmur of voices.

And then—both stiffened, and held, so it seemed to him, his thumping heart in a vice—a dark form blackened the doorway and began noiselessly to mount the stairs.

The light, though not brilliant, was full behind him, as he had left the door open to the street.

They immediately recognised Dingwall.

Never had either lad seen a famous

They immediately recognised Dingwall.

Never had either lad seen a famous criminal at closer quarters. He was within arm's-length of them as he stood at his post of waiting behind the panel, listening to every word that passed between Van Zuyder, 'the diamond merchant, and the confederate, Fleck, in the inner room.

At last Fleck gave the promised signal, by muttering a loud exclamation, springing up at the same time and moving to the far door.

Dingwall watched through a tiny peephole, and saw the Dutchman momentarily turn. On the table behind the diamond-dealer's broad back reposed a little leather bag. Its neck was open, and within Dingwall could just catch the flash and glitter of precious stones.

He touched the spring, the panel flew open, his rubber-covered hand shot in and grabbed the bag, just as Fleck turned and offered a few words of surprised explanation to the Dutchman.

What happened then was a chaotic

Fleck turned and offered a few words of surprised explanation to the Dutchman.

What happened then was a chaotic riot of action and sound, for even as Dingwall dangled the precious haul halfway towards his pocket, the cupboard doors flew open, and from two separate points the boys landed themselves on him, Kit seizing the bag, and Barney winding a stout coil of rope about the fellow's slashing and swirling arms.

Together, by sheer weight and combined strength, they bore him to the floor, where Kit made a gag of his handkerchief, and Barney, having tightened the last of the necessary knots, rendered the thief more helpless by throwing a small sack he had discovered over his head.

Nor was theirs the only scene of excitement, for from the room beyond the wood partition a perfect babel of sound arose—Van Zuyder screaming shrilly, and the innocent Fleck mildly expostulating.

"You get along with the goods," Barney whispered. "I can watch this skunk till you send a copper along. And don't forget what the governor told you about the swag."

Kit nodded, and went down the stairs three at a time. Almost the first man he met in the sunlit street was a police-officer, to whom he explained that his chum was in possession of a much-wanted man, after

which he dashed back to the hotel, and locked the bag of precious stones into Bell's safe.

An hour slipped by, and Kit began to feel desperately hungry. As a matter of fact, no food had passed his lips since breakfast, at seven that morning. So, with the best intentions in the world, he closed the sitting-room door and went down to the dining-room.

tions in the world, he closed the sitting-room door and went down to the dining-room.

He was half-way through a very good meal when Barney, looking very dishevelled and somewhat battered, appeared.

The Irish boy came to a halt beside his chum's table.

"Hallo, Kit! Thought you were minding the jewels?" he said.

Kit looked up in surprise.

"Minding the jewels! No one told me to mind 'em. I buzzed 'em into the safe let into the wall of the chief's private sitting-room upstairs, locked it, and came away."

Barney whistled.

"You think they'll be safe?" he asked. "I've had a talk to the policeman who took Dingwall to the station, and he says there was a confederate working with him—perhaps two—whom they haven't caught. The idea just occurred to me as I came along home, if one of those chaps should have been posted outside that house in George Street he might have seen you come out and have followed you into the hotel."

Kit rose.

"Anyway, he wouldn't know I had the jewels," he said. "Still, to make

Kit rose.

"Anyway, he wouldn't know I had the jewels," he said. "Still, to make quite sure, I'll go upstairs, and stay there till Mr. Bell returns. I suppose you've seen nothing of him?"

"Nothing at all. So far as I can make out, he's not been near the place since he went out yesterday afternoon."

By this time they had gained the

afternoon."
By this time they had gained the landing leading to their room. Outside this sitting-room door Kit came to a sudden halt, and the face he turned towards Barney Martin was white as driven snow.

"Someone's inside the room," he muttered huskily, and threw the door onen.

muttered huskily, and threw the door open.

A loud cry escaped him as a quick form straightened up from the open safe. Kit seized a heavy paper-weight and poised it threateningly.

"Drop those diamonds, or I'll heave this at your head!" he cried, at the same time signalling to Barney to fetch assistance.

The stranger laughed, and showed a pallid, heavily-lined face.

"You needn't worry, Kit," he said. "Behold in me, Raynor Fleck, the man who made the capture of Robert Dingwall red-handed possible."

"Raynor Fleck! How d'you know my name?" asked Kit, eyeing the fellow narrowly.

Fleck passed a moist handkerchief over his cleverly-lined and painted

Fleck passed a moist handkerchief over his cleverly-lined and painted face.

"Because Fleck and Garnett Bell are one and the same."

Kit could have shricked aloud for sheer joy had not the detective restrained him.

"We've got the stones, and in a little while Mr. Van Zuyder, accompanied by one of the Birmingham police, will be here to claim them. Now run down and tell Barney to get ready for lunch, and that no assistance will be needed. Then, while the chops are being done to a turn, I'll just tell you why I assumed the character of Raynor Fleck, a luggage-thief, and how, after keeping Robert Dingwall under observation for three whole days, I at last managed to get into his confidence, and later into his employ, by the simple expedient of pretending to steal his portmanteau."

"And Dingwall, what will happen to him?"

Bell laughed as he led the way towards the dining-room.

"He'll go back, I suppose, to the place where I saw him once before, when on a visit to his Majesty's Convict-Prison of Portland in June, 1912. He was just about to be released then. I wouldn't mind betting it'll be a deal sight longer than three years before we see him again. Ah! Here is Mr. Van Zuyder, to whom I have explained everything. Van Zuyder," introducing the boys, "these are my two assistants who helped me so cleverly in this case. If you want to know their share in the affair, just ask them, and they'll tell you while I run to my room and make myself ready for lunch. Barney, just take Mr. Van Zuyder in."

(Next Monday Garnett Bell and his two boy assistants engage upon a new case. Order your copy in advance to avoid disappointment.)

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