

LEE OF MIDDLESEX WRITES ON CRICKET INSIDE!

The BOYS' FRIEND 1^{1d}/₂

TWELVE PAGES!

TWENTY-SEVENTH YEAR!

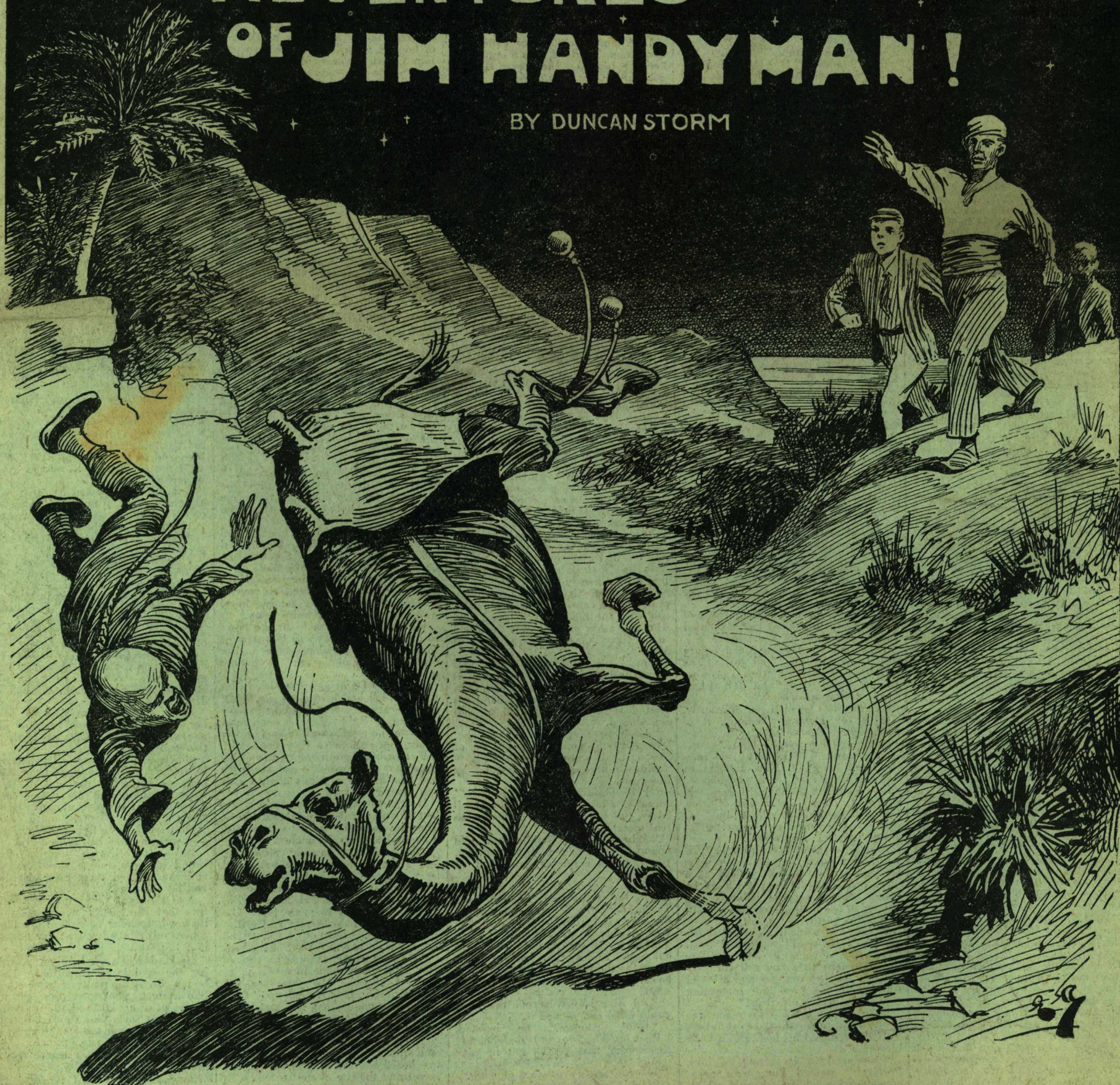
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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending May 14th, 1921.

THE ADVENTURES OF JIM HANDYMAN!

BY DUNCAN STORM



THE AMBUSH IN THE DESERT!

As the camel drew level with the two watchers the padrone whirled the bolas over his head and with a mighty heave let fly. The lead weights on their leathern thongs immediately entangled round the animal's legs and brought it to the ground with a heavy thud, the rider following suit. Jim Handyman and his chums would be safe for a while at least!

Once Read Never Forgotten—The Greatest Adventure Yarn Ever Written!

The Adventures of Jim Handyman.



Highway Robbery!

The Bombay Castle, with Dick Dorrington & Co., Dr. Crabhunter, Scorchy Wilkinson, and other masters and boys, put in at Gibraltar on one of her famous voyages. The boys were arrested on a charge of being involved in a smuggling affair. They escaped, however, and on rejoining their ship had drastic revenge on Kidd & Co., a gang of bullies, for wrecking their cabin. The ship then steamed into Tangier.

The boys went ashore, and drove into the desert on camels. They were captured by a gang of Arabs, and imprisoned in an old Moorish castle. There they met four British seamen under similar circumstances. Jim Handyman escaped, and set sail for Gibraltar in a cutter. He had not been at sea long when he discovered he was being pursued by a large sailing vessel, and the pursuer was gaining on him hand over fist.

Soon, straight ahead of him, a white pencil of light shot up from the horizon, and, swinging round, fixed itself like the bullseye lantern of a policeman on a white pile of distant buildings.

Jim was reassured about his course now. That was the searchlight of H.M.S. Mischief, and she was giving the city of Tangier a show. Or perhaps she was keeping an eye on the wharf in the hope of seeing the missing boys come off to her.

Nearer and nearer came the following sail. Jim could see the craft now in the darkness—a big lateener showing a great spread of sail on her tall, raking spars.

Jim guessed what she was—a Spanish coasting felucca, which was following this course along the African shore to make the most of the easterly breeze, and to keep out of the strong current which always sets through the Straits from the Atlantic.

She was fairly whizzing through the water, and heading, like himself, for Tangier. But she soon caught sight of him. He could hear the men talking excitedly aboard her, and the great sails were brailled up to slacken her speed.

They were talking Spanish, and were evidently much concerned to find a small ship's boat cruising in this fashion through the pitch-black night.

"Ahoy!" called a voice, and a lantern flashed in the darkness.

"Ahoy!" answered Jim.

"Quien va?" ("Who goes there?") asked the voice.

"H.M.S. Washtub!" answered Jim. "Bound from Monkey Mountain to Tangier with a cargo of orang-utang!"

Of course, the Spaniards aboard the felucca did not understand this cheerful reply. They put up their helm so as to bring him to their weather side, and lit a flare which illumined both him and Cecil. And, greatly to Jim's delight, he saw the swarthy face and red brewer's cap of his old friend the smuggling padrone.

"Good-evening, Don Licquorice de Barcelona Nut!" he called joyfully. "Half a mo', and I'll lower my sail! Where are you bound for?"

"Tangier!" came the answer.

"Right-ho!" replied Jim. "That's the station where I get out! But

your ship will do it faster than me!" And, leaving the tiller, he jumped forward and lowered his sail with a run.

A rope was thrown to him, and he was brought alongside the felucca.

The padrone recognised him now, as his grinning face showed in the light of the lantern.

"Caramba!" he exclaimed. "It is the little English demon! There has been great shipwrecks! Merciful

Heaven, to think of all those fine young English boys all drowned! They were demons and the sons of demons, but they were such little men!"

The worthy padrone was thus lamenting when Jim reassured him. Jim realised that the padrone thought that, finding him out here—almost open Atlantic—something very serious must have happened to the Bombay Castle.

"It's all right, Alonzo!" said he. "There hasn't been a shipwreck! The Bombay Castle is in Tangier—savvy? But me and my messmates have been pinched by Barbary pirates ashore, and there's a hurry! So take my boat in tow, and bustle along!"

The padrone gave a gesture of astonishment.

In his smuggling trade he used a good deal the waters of Gibraltar Bay, and knew a fair amount of English.

"Pirate!" he exclaimed. "What pirate?"

"Sidi Bu Ahmed!" replied Jim. "He's collared the whole bunch—Pongo, Dick, young Whiskers, the middy, and fat Jumbo, and Chip; all the nuts! He's got the lot!"

The padrone made a gesture of despair.

"Him bad man—wrong 'un!" said he.

"I should think he was, the yellow-faced heathen!" replied Jim. "Now I'll sheer close alongside, and get aboard."

The little craft came alongside the felucca, and a dozen eager hands were held out to help Jim aboard the arching decks.

The hands were again outstretched to his companion who had remained outside the circle of the lantern.

They had got hold of Cecil before they knew what they had got, and as he jumped aboard they gave a simultaneous howl, and fell backwards at the apparition.

"Caramba!" yelled the Spaniards. "It is the Demonio! Look, it is Baalzebub! Ay de mi!"

"Baal-your-grandmother!" exclaimed Jim. "Haven't you seen old Cecil before? Now I come to think of it, he wasn't with us when we went for that little sail together, padrone. Don't be afraid of him. He doesn't bite anything but his dinner! Good monkey—savvy? Real good monkey! Boy Scout!"

And when the crew heard that Cecil was a Boy Scout they became a little bit reassured. But they kept at a good arm's-length from Cecil as he rested himself on the hatches, and blinked at the lamp, showing his teeth in a great yawn.

"When he yawns like that, it shows that he's hungry!" suggested Jim. "Got such a thing as one of those penny melons that you sell for twopence and a few oranges and a bit of bread? If you give him something to bite, he won't bite you!"

"Me dio susto!" (He made me afraid!) whimpered the cabin-boy, who had bumped his head against the bulwark.

"No need to be afraid of him, Percival," replied Jim, with great condescension. "He's a real white-headed boy, my monkey! Never tells a lie. Never steals. Never does anything that he ought not to do. But he loves melons and raisins."

The cabin-boy took the hint. He

dived down below, and brought up a

big water-melon, a bunch of raisins as big as his head, and several little rolls of the white cakey bread that the Spaniards are most fond of.

The boat had been taken in tow now, and the sails of the felucca were full spread again. The gallant craft was moving through the water in splendid style, and Jim's heart was as light as a feather.

The felucca which was called the Santissima Trinidad, was a craft with heels to her, and the breeze she had got suited her down to the water-line. She fairly whizzed through the sea, leaving a trail of white, fleecy foam behind her.

"You come supper now, mister!" said the padrone. "We get to Tangier in two hour, or less!"

Down below, in the stuffy little cabin, there was a good supper of dried shark fried in oil, with green peas.

Jim thought it was the finest supper he had ever had in his life, and the padrone gave him a big mug of steaming black coffee, which put new life into him.

After that there was sticky, sweet Spanish pastry. And Jim thoroughly enjoyed this.

He looked round the little cabin curiously.

On the bulkhead was the portrait of a gentleman in evening-dress.

"Who's that, padrone?" he asked.

"Zat, he is my brother. He is good brother—he is a ver' good brother!" said the padrone, beaming all over his mahogany face. "Him got coffee-shop in Liverpool. Him marry English lady out a pickle factory!"

"He looks a real toff!" said Jim. "And what are those leaden weights and the rope?" he asked.

The padrone laughed.

"Souvenir, mister—memoria!" he added. "When I was young man I did go to ze Argentine to make my fortune on ze pampas. I use ze bolas an' ze lazo long time. I was cowboy. What you call im—guacho!"

Jim sat up, and took sudden interest in the padrone.

So this mahogany-faced old pirate had been a guacho—one of those wild horsemen of the South American prairies who can bring down a young colt with the bolas at full speed, and who are more expert with the lasso than the famous "greasers" of Mexico.

Jim was smitten with a new and entrancing idea. His eyes gleamed as he figured out the time which had elapsed since the Chinese must have started from the stronghold of Sidi Bu Ahmed.

"Look here, padrone!" said he. "How would you like a chance of picking up five hundred pounds?"

The padrone sat overwhelmed by the notion.

"Five hundred English pounds!" repeated Jim. "None of your Bradburys, but the solid gold durions—the real metal!"

"Where you find five hundred gold pounds?" demanded the padrone, lighting his cigarette, and full of business.

"Why," said Jim, "somewhere about the time that we get near Tangier a man will come flying along the coast road from the same direction I have come from. He will race into Tangier on his camel, and he will race out again in less than half an hour, when the saddlebags of his camel will be carrying a thousand pounds in gold—real gold!"

And Jim leaned across the little cabin table and tapped it.

"Gold, Alonzo!" he insisted. "Real gold! Do you understand? Same stuff that you've got in your teeth!"

The padrone's eyes were glowing.

"Gold!" he exclaimed. "El oro. Viva el oro!"

"That's the stuff!" said Jim. "A thousand pounds. Five hundred for you and five hundred for me."

"But it is a matter of police!" exclaimed the padrone, his face falling.

"It is robbery, and I am not a bandit!"

"It's not robbery!" said Jim. "That gold is the price of my head. The man will be racing back to Sidi Bu Ahmed. He wanted to cut off my head at dawn, and throw my body to the tame lion there. The tame lion has been fed on donkey till he's fed up with donkey, and the rascals were going to give him a taste of me by way of a change. That thousand pounds is mine. But if you can throw a bolas to wind up that camel's legs, and bring him on his cheekbone, and fetch the Chink down out of the saddle, five hundred good durions, five hundred broad pieces, five hundred golden dubbloons are yours for keeps. All I want is the Chink and the other five hundred."

Could the padrone bring down a camel with the bolas?

There is no Spanish expression for "I should smile!" but the expression on the padrone's rugged face spoke it as plainly as words.

"Well, what about it?" asked Jim.

"Nothing simpler," replied the padrone. "If this Chinese evil one is attempting to purchase the assassination of the honourable young caballero, he is the enemy of all right-thinking men, the enemy of all men of honour. I will with the most profound pleasure bring down his camel and make him prisoner. If the honourable young English caballero wishes that the rascal shall be deprived of life," added the padrone, "I have a good ceija knife."

"No," replied Jim. "I don't want to do him in. I don't like that sort of thing. If you can just lasso him up, and put him in a bag for me, like a penny bun, and raft me out to the Bombay Castle—that's all I want."

The padrone made a gesture of delight.

"Consider it done, Excellency!" said he. "We will catch your Chinese murderer, and we will put him in a bag. And you shall take the blood money from his camel-bags, and we will render him safe abordo of the Bombay Castle. Verily, you English boys are demons, and the sons of demons! I know the coast road, and I know the place to catch him. He will take the lower road, for he will not dare approach Tangier otherwise. There is a picket on the upper road, and that is known to everyone who has business with Sidi Bu Ahmed. We will catch him in the sand-dunes, and bring his mouth to the earth. He shall kiss the dust, this dog, and the son of dogs!"

"That's the jolly talk!" said Jim encouragingly.

"Now we will go to the deck!" said the padrone. "We cannot be far from Tangier nor from the place where we will wait for this evil fellow!"

They climbed out on deck, and there, five miles ahead, they could plainly see the lights of the Bombay Castle and of H.M.S. Mischief.

Somewhat to the surprise of his men, the padrone changed his course, and bore towards the sandy shore, which lay about four miles away.

He stationed his mate in the bows to heave the lead, for, in this part of the wide bay or depression in the coast, the floor of the sea was shallow and sandy.

As Harry Dark had prophesied, the wind, which had brought them along at a fine speed, was beginning to take off into a light night breeze, and there was no great sound of surf on the sandy, open shore as they neared it.

The padrone motioned to two of his crew that they were to get ready to row him ashore in Jim's boat, which was towing astern.

He ran in till there was only a few feet of water under the felucca's keel. Then he gave the word to lower the sails, and to drop the anchor.

The boat was brought alongside, and the padrone, with his bolas and lasso, dropped into it, having thrown a big canvas bag in the stern-sheets.

Then Jim and the two men got in, and Cecil wanted to come too. The padrone looked doubtfully at Cecil.

"Does this son of a thousand demons want to come, too?" he asked.

"He's all right, skipper!" replied Jim. "He may come in useful if we have a tussle. He's a rare old scrapper when he's roused up!"

The padrone nodded, and away they went for the shore, the boat bobbing up and down in the short waves.

And soon she came drifting ashore on a wild, sandy beach, where nothing was heard but the solemn beat of the waves and the cry of the curlew.

The Spaniards leaped out, and dragged her high up on the sands. Then they stood by the boat whilst the padrone led the way up through a group of tumbled sandhills, through which passed the apology of a road for the stronghold of Sidi Bu Ahmed.

Presently he crouched, and lifted his hand. They had arrived just in time. Along the track came a loose-limbed, flying camel, and high-perched on his saddle sat a shape which Jim had no difficulty in recognising as the cat-headed Chinese.

He was flogging on his swift camel, and heading for the few scattered lights of the city of Tangier, travelling as fast as he could go.

Jim felt a pang at letting him pass un molested. But he wanted his man, and he wanted the thousand pounds to pay the padrone for his skill and for capturing his enemy.

"That's the chap!" he whispered to the padrone, as the camel, with its swift, slugging stride, passed them and melted in the darkness like a phantom. "Now all we have got to do is to wait here till he has drawn the shekels from the savings-bank and comes back by this road. Then you bolas his camel, and put him in the sack. His camel has got the hump now, but he'll have the hump then!"

added Jim with pleasant merriment.

The three waited there, crouching in the sandhills.

It was all very dark and still now, save for the slight rustle of the drifting sand in the night wind, and the occasional piping of a night bird.

A quarter of an hour passed with astonishing slowness on these lonely sandhills, and Jim found out that, when you are waiting to do a high-way robbery, your nose tickles, and you want to sneeze badly.

Presently the padrone lifted his head and sniffed the wind.

Cecil grunted, and was still.

"Is he coming along?" whispered Jim.

The padrone shook his finger. Which is the Spanish negative.

There was a faint tinkling of a bell in the darkness.

"What's that?" asked Jim.

"No good!" whispered the padrone. "Lepero—no good—leper!"

Jim felt a crawling up his back as that sinister tinkle sounded in the darkness.

He had heard about lepers who were often spies. They were bad to meet, anyway.

Nearer and nearer came the tinkle of a bell. There was a human being moving about somewhere in the darkness of the sand dunes.

Jim felt himself grow cold, and the padrone crossed himself.

Then he drew his knife from his scabbard.

Jim held his breath. He could see a white-robed shape passing against the dark sky not twenty yards from him, and he put his hand over Cecil's ugly muzzle in case he should growl or make a noise.

But the leper passed on, and, with a sigh of relief, Jim heard the tinkle of the bell die away in the darkness.

The padrone sighed, too.

"Leper, him no good!" he whispered.

Then he stiffened. Something else was coming along that dark road, heading out for the country at full speed. It was a camel, right enough. They could hear the rattle of the steel nose-chain, and the creaking of the saddle. Then followed the smack of a whip.

It was the Chinese. He had got his money from some evil source in Tangier. Now he was racing for the stronghold of Sidi Bu Ahmed to claim Jim's head.

Little did he dream that the head he was riding for was peeping just above one of those dark sandhills by the roadside.

Slowly and deliberately the padrone unrolled his bolas, and set the leaden balls swinging at the end of their leathern thongs as the camel came grunting and stopping along over the sands.

He passed like a flying shadow, and Jim thought they had missed him.

But those leaden weights flew round at tremendous speed as the padrone whirled them over his head and let them go.

And the next thing that happened was that the racing camel stood on its head, turning over in a complete somersault, throwing its rider heavily into the sand.

He landed like a bombshell, scattering the sand in all directions. Then he lay still as the padrone, with a leap like a tiger, was upon him, holding the point of his knife at the assassin's throat in a style that showed that he had been through more of this sort of thing than he had any right to.

For a moment Jim's heart misgave him.

Supposing they had bolassed the wrong man!

"Move, fiend, and you die!" whispered the padrone, still holding the point of his knife against the Adam's apple of the fallen man.

Jim drew Skeleton's electric-torch from his pocket. It was near burned

cut, and the filament of the tiny bulb only glowed red when he pressed the spring. But it showed enough light to allow him to recognise his man. It was the cat-headed emissary of the dread Chang, chief of the Trident Society of China.

The Chinese was not dead. Soon he opened his eyes and commenced to struggle. But the padrone had already started to lash him up with his raw hide lasso, and in a few minutes had him tied up in a ball. He was then rolled in the canvas sail-bag and made fast.

Then they looked to the fallen camel, which lay quite still, with its hind legs bound together by the bolas, which had curled round them, and its long neck stretched out on the ground.

It tried to bite Jim with its yellow teeth as he walked up to it; but Jim hopped aside quickly, for he knew that there is no wound in the world so difficult to heal as a camel bite.

There were the leathern camel-bags. He hastily unstrapped these, and, plunging his hand into the nearest, drew forth two heavy bags of gold.

The other pocket of the bags gave a similar result.

"There you are, Alonzo!" whispered Jim. "It is as I told you. That merchant in the sack was carrying the price of my doom. Now we will divvy up, and let the camel loose, and get back to the lugger. You secure the gold. I'll look after the man. He is mine! Cecil, lift me this bag!"

Cecil made no bones about lifting the bag. He grabbed it with his great paws, and hoisted it over his shoulder. The bolas was removed from the camel, which staggered to its feet, and marched off solemnly to the nearest patch of Mirram grass, where it started grazing peacefully, doubtless glad that its rider had been duly sacked, and that there was no wild ride that night back to the stronghold of Sidi Bu Ahmed.

Then the landing-party took their way back to the shore, where they found their two Spaniards standing anxiously by the boat waiting their return.

The padrone gave the low smugglers' whistle, which is like the cry of the night birds. Then the two slipped the boat into the water, and were standing ready to shove off when Cecil dumped the bag containing the captive aboard, and the padrone and Jim climbed over the gunwale with their heavy bags of gold coin.

A light flashed in the darkness now and then to show them where the felucca was anchored, and, with short-dipped strokes, they rowed off to her.

The bag containing the Chinese was thrown aboard unceremoniously, and rolled down the cabin stairs into the

little cabin, which was closed and locked.

Then the boat was veered astern, and all hands helped to get up the anchor and set sail.

And it was just about midnight when the felucca sailed up to the great shape of the Bombay Castle, as

Jim told the padrone to help Cecil to bring the Chinese in the sack aboard the Bombay Castle, and jumping across the barge, made his way up the companion to the deck.

Under each arm he carried a neat canvas bag containing two hundred and fifty golden sovereigns.

A flutter of the night breeze parted the blind for a moment, and Jim peeped in. There was Captain Handyman and Mr. Lal Tata and Scorchers Wilkinson and Captain Roberts, the commander of H.M.S. Mischief, all seated, smoking solemnly and sadly.

Captain Handyman was speaking. "I think your midshipmen will turn up again, sir," he was saying, "and I'm not afraid for my young rips of schoolboys, even if this chap, Sidi Bu Armed, has got them. But I'm anxious about my boy Jim—terribly anxious, for there's more behind this than appears on the surface."

Captain Handyman paused. Jim had another peep as the blind lifted in the night breeze.

The tears were rolling down Mr. Lal Tata's fat face, and his father sat at his desk looking miserably at a cribbage-board before him. The red peg marked twenty-three.

"Look at this crib-board," said Captain Handyman sadly. "My boy had got twenty-three lickings pegged down for him. But he was a good boy. Never was there a better boy, though I've often given him a good hiding for the good of his soul. But he was an affectionate boy, a brave boy, a kind boy. Straight as a die, and good to his mother, generous as they make 'em, and the pluck of a little bantam rooster. Hadn't he, Lal?"

"Yes," sobbed Mr. Lal Tata. "He was splendid young fellows. He always reminded me of Admiral Horatio Nelson when he was a young chaps. Just such another, ready always to do duty. If he did not like lessons of Algebra and other learned subjects, who shall blame him? Boys of high spirit do not love lessons. I did not love lessons when I was a young boy fellow. And now I fear he is dead. Ho, ho, ho! Our young Jim fellow is dead, and my heart turns to water. I have pains in my stomach, and there is dust on my head. Ai, Ai, Ai!"

And Lal, covering his head with a big red handkerchief, lifted up his voice and wept aloud as the padrone and Cecil dragged the bag containing Jim captive up to the bridge.

Poor Mr. Lal Tata was making such a noise that no one of the company in the chart-room heard the padrone as the dragged the bag containing the Chinese up to the boat-deck and gave it a cheerful kick, just to let the Chinese inside the bag know who was who.

Captain Handyman, grim and sad, looked at the pegs in the cribbage-board.

"I am afraid my poor boy is gone," said he. "And how I'm going to break the news to his poor mother I don't know. I thought I had done him a good turn when I got

him out of the Port of London the night these scoundrels served the black patch on me. But they've got their agents all over the world, and I'm afraid they've snapped my poor little Jim!"

Then Captain Handyman started to his feet, for through the doorway of the chart-room there sounded a clear and cheerful voice.

"No, they haven't, father!" called the voice of the missing Jim. "I've got the agent this time. I've got him in the bag here!"

And there, in the doorway, stood the missing Jim, his eyes shining, nursing under each arm a bag of good red blood-money.

And Captain Handyman flicked the pegs out of the cribbage-board, wiping out the promise of twenty-three well-earned lickings, and stood speechless before his son and heir.

Captain Handyman stood there, unable to believe his ears, and unable to believe his eyes.

There was Jim, his son. Jim alive and in the flesh, with the padrone grinning behind him as he stood with his foot on the big canvas sack.

"Why, Jim, where are the other boys?" demanded his astonished and delighted father.

"They are shut up in a Moorish castle along the coast, father," said Jim. And he proceeded to tell the tale of their adventures since they had left the ship.

Captain Handyman stood astounded at Jim's narrative. He had had a few striking adventures in his own lifetime, but his son and heir was plainly eclipsing him.

The captain of H.M.S. Mischief roared with laughter when he heard how Jim had gone ashore, and, in the night, had captured the bearer of his own death-sentence, together with the payment for his own proposed execution.

The sack containing the Chinese was dragged into the chart-room and opened, and there sat the cat-headed Chink, looking about as evil as it is possible for a human being to look.

"So this is the chap who wanted to murder my son, is it?" demanded Captain Handyman. "I don't remember ever having seen his ugly face before! But we'll clap him in irons, and shut him in a safe cell aboard your ship, sir," he added, turning to the captain of the H.M.S. Mischief.

"Now it's getting on for an hour after midnight. But, if I don't pull that turkey buzzard's roost about Bu Ahmed's ears by dawn, and get all our boys back, my name is not James Handyman!"

(Another grand long instalment of this super story in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND. Order your copy TO-DAY!)



THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL. The cabin door flew open, and there stood Jim Handyman, with some of the best blood-money and certainly the worst crook in the world. Captain Handyman, in his relief at seeing his son once more, flicked the pegs from his cribbage-board, and by so doing saved young Jim from some twenty well-deserved lickings.

she lay at her anchor with some shore boats beside her.

She was taking on board vegetables and flour. But the gangs who were working this cargo had knocked off for cocoa, and no one took any notice as the felucca, with lowered sails, slid up alongside one of the big shore-barges and made fast.

High up under the high bridge he had seen a light in the chart-room, and he knew his father was there.

He crept softly up the ladder and met no one, and soon he reached the windows of the chart-room.

These were open, and, though the blinds were drawn, Jim could hear the sound of voices.

HOW TO PLAY CRICKET

by LEE of Middlesex

THE QUALITIES THAT MAKE FOR SUCCESS!

Wherever they go they will receive a tremendous welcome, and every county they meet will be anxious to do their utmost to lower their colours. They are, undoubtedly, a very strong combination. In Warwick Armstrong they have a captain who is a born leader, and this is a very valuable asset to any team.

And here I would point out to my readers that too often not sufficient thought is given to the selection of their captain. Games are won and lost more often than many of you think by bad captaincy. In junior cricket less than ten runs often divide the scores at the close of a match, which is usually a single-innings game; therefore it can be seen that good captaincy means a tremendous lot, no matter what class of cricket one may play in.

Now, Warwick Armstrong knows his team, which is the first duty of a skipper, and that takes a lot more doing than the casual thinker would dream of. It means knowing your men's cricketing value according to the conditions and the opposition. I know very well that this is sometimes a matter beyond consideration in small club cricket, but I point it

out to emphasise the fact that a great leader does something else besides winning the toss—or losing it—and giving the order of going in, and changing bowlers. The successful captain is he who does the right thing at the right time most often, and this faculty can only be got by experience and observation.

Bowler and Wicket-keeper.

Let me give you an example. One of England's greatest batsmen has a weakness for getting l.b.w. Time after time this man's wicket will be taken by a change bowler, whose chief asset will be to send down a straight ball with a slight variation in pace. Very often that bowler will be taken off as soon as he has accomplished his purpose. He probably would not be successful against inferior batsmen; it is just a case of playing on a man's weakness, and it pays to find those weaknesses out.

A very great help to a skipper is the wicket-keeper. One of England's greatest captains as well as one of her greatest all-round players was the Hon. F. S. Jackson. Whenever he was in doubt as to policy, he never failed to consult—I am writing of test matches—Dick Lilley, a wicket-

keeper who kept for England on more than twenty occasions. A wicket-keeper has unique opportunities of studying his opponents and also as to how his own bowlers are bowling. Dick Lilley—he was always known as "Dick," although his right name is Arthur, I believe—was, during his playing days, a great adviser; a tip to the bowler was often sufficient to get rid of a man who was well set. His county was Warwickshire.

There is no doubt we shall be hard pressed to win back the "ashes" from such a strong side as the Australian. And yet I do not despair. Indeed, I am just as optimistic of our success as Mr. Armstrong is of Australia's. Speaking quite seriously, I do not think our men touched anything like the form they are likely to show during the coming season. Just fancy, for instance, our "Patsy" Hendren playing in five test matches without once touching a century. I will be bold enough to say that I don't think it is likely to happen here. And Jack Hobbs, too, and Russell and Woolley, and the other good men and true all seemed to fall short of reproducing their best. Nearly all of them are more than likely to be renewing acquaintance with Armstrong's men in the test matches here, and we have others who, should they run into form early, will have to be considered.

There is Mr. D. J. Knight, the crack Surrey amateur, who in his day I place as the finest amateur bat in England. Then we have that remarkable young man, Mr. G. T. S. Stevens, who last season played for the Gentlemen against the Players at Lords, scoring 47 runs, when everyone else was failing against the best bowlers in England, and this, mind you, when he was still a schoolboy. If he does not develop into an all-England player, I shall be very surprised, as will most of my colleagues. Another brilliant young University

cricketer who might also get the highest honours, is the Cambridge man, Mr. A. P. F. Chapman, who distinguished himself in this very same match by as brilliant a display of out-fielding as one would wish to see.

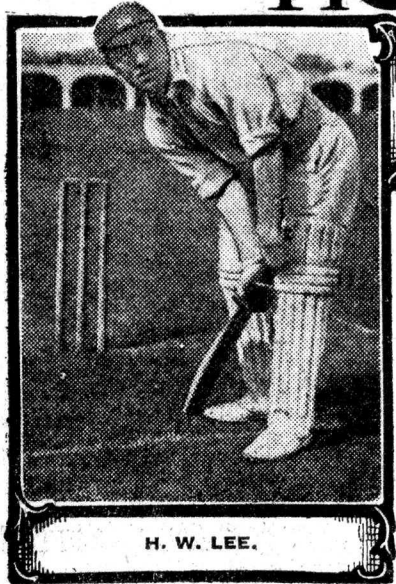
Fielding.

Now a word about fielding. You can't field efficiently unless you know your bowlers. It should not be necessary for the captain, unless he has some special plan in view, to have to place his men every time he changes a bowler. As soon as a change is made, the fieldsmen should be able to take up a position which he knows will be best suited for that particular bowler. I have seen in junior cricket four slips to a slow bowler just because a fast bowler has four there. Invariably the slower the bowler the deeper the field should be the rule, with your good catchers in the out-field.

Now, I hold the view that in a short game, fielding is the most enjoyable phase of the game. If one is in real earnest to do the best for one's side, it is a case of being "on your toes" the whole time your opponents are in. And I don't use the words "on your toes" as a mere figure of speech. I mean it literally.

When fielding, keep well balanced on the fore part of the feet. You will always be slow in getting off from the mark if you are solidly on your heels; you spring from the toes, and a fraction late means the missed catch in the slips, and the game lost. It is the golden rule for fieldsmen—"keep on your toes."

H. W. Lee
Middlesex
(Another fine article by this famous cricketer in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)



H. W. LEE.

There is no sound so sweet to me as to hear the thud of a ball meeting good willow, especially when I myself am holding the bat, and the ball has simply flown to the boundary. No doubt many of you enjoy the same experience, and it differs from most good things in that the oftener the experience the greater the joy. Well, we all hope for a good season, and what a season is promised us!

The Australians.

Foremost of all is, of course, the visit of the victorious Australians.

A SPLENDID LONG COMPLETE JIMMY SILVER YARN. By OWEN CONQUEST.



The Fighting Form Master!

A FINE TALE OF THE CHUMS
OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

The Return of Gummage Major!

"Gummage major's come back!" Tubby Muffin fairly howled that announcement into the doorway of the end study.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were at tea in the end study in the Fourth, and they were discussing a topic that was just then of burning interest to the Fourth Form at Rookwood School.

The fact that Mr. Dalton, their new Form-master, was to leave Rookwood, worried the Fistical Four considerably.

They liked and admired Mr. Richard Dalton, whom they alluded to, among themselves as Dicky, and they thought it very hard lines that Dicky had to go.

So Tubby Muffin's startling announcement found them very pre-occupied, and they declined to be startled, or even interested, by Tubby's statement that Gummage major had come back.

Who Gummage major was they didn't even know, and they didn't want to know, and they did not ask Tubby.

Arthur Edward Lovell, who was talking, went on talking, just as if Reginald Muffin did not exist at all.

"It's simply rotten about Dicky!" said Arthur Edward. "Any chap can see that he's one of the best—"

"One of the very best!" said Jimmy Silver.

"We liked old Bootles," said Raby. "But Dicky beats old Bootles hollow! The Head must be a duffer to let him go!"

"An awful ass, though I wouldn't say so to him personally!" remarked Newcome.

"And what's he going for?" continued Arthur Edward, as he cracked his second egg, still heedless of Tubby Muffin. "Just because he stood up in a boxing-match at the Bunbury Ring, as a gentleman boxer, to bag a purse of fifty guineas to help an old comrade who was crooked in the war. Why, the Head ought to admire him for that!"

"We do!" said Raby.

"I say," bawled Tubby Muffin, "Gummage major's come back, you fellows! Do you hear? Mornny's seen him in Coombe—"

"Who and what the thump is he?" exclaimed Lovell, exasperated. "Bother the man! What about him?"

"He's come back!" gasped Tubby Muffin.

"Well, is there anything unusual in an old Rookwooder looking in at Rookwood?" demanded Jimmy Silver. "What the dickens does it matter, and where does the excitement come in?"

"Oh, you don't know," said Tubby. "It's Gummage, who was expelled. That was before our time. He was sacked for pub-haunting and going to the races and carrying on generally. An awful character, I believe. The Head fairly booted him out after a row. Now he's come back. He's putting up at the Bird-in-Hand, I tell you!"

"Must be a shady sort of character to put up at that den!" growled Lovell. "But I don't see anything to get excited about."

"You will when I tell you," said Tubby. "Gummage major was

expelled, and I've heard Bulkeley and Neville and Carthew talking about him. He's been seen in the village, I tell you, and they all know what he's come back for."

"Well, what has he come back for?" asked Newcome. "To lick the Head!"

"What?"

The Fistical Four jumped at that. Reginald Muffin had succeeded in startling them at last.

"To lick the Head!" yelled Lovell. Tubby grinned, much pleased with the impression he had made.

"That's it!" he answered. "Oh, don't be an ass!" said Jimmy Silver crossly.

"It's true!" howled Tubby. "Old Mack knows all about him; so does the sergeant. He was here before our time, but they remember him. The sergeant saw him in Coombe, and Gummage major gave him a message for the Head before two or three Rookwood chaps. He told Sergeant Kettle to mention to the Head that he'd come back to keep his promise."

"And what was his promise?"

"When he was sacked he told the Head he would come back when he was a man and thrash him."

"Phew!"

"That's about ten years ago, I believe," said Muffin. "It's a jolly long time, anyhow. He said he'd have come back before, only there was the war, you know, and he couldn't come before now. Now he's come, and he says he's coming on to Rookwood to-morrow afternoon to keep his promise. He's going to bring a dog-whip—"

"For the Head?" shrieked Jimmy. "Yes."

"My only hat!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. forgot tea; they even forgot Dicky Dalton. The return of Gummage major, once of the Sixth, was a much more exciting matter. An Old Boy returning to Rookwood with a dog-whip for the Head was the most tremendous surprise that had ever happened, or could happen, at Rookwood.

"It can't be true!" Lovell gasped, at last. "The fellow can only be gassing."

"It's true!" chortled Tubby Muffin. "The Head's going to be dog-whipped to-morrow. Fancy that! Fancy him hopping! He, he, he!"

Mornington looked into the study, grinning.

"You fellows heard?"

"Is it true?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"True as a die! I heard Gummage major talking to the sergeant in the High Street in Coombe," grinned Mornny. "He's a hefty fellow, six feet high, with fists like legs of mutton, and a busted boko. He's been in the prize-ring since he left Rookwood. I hear that he always was a hefty fellow with his fists, and he took up prize-fighting for a living. Fancy a giddy prize-fighter comin' here to lick the Head to-morrow!"

"Great Scott!"

"Does the Head know?" gasped Lovell.

"I don't know whether Sergeant Kettle delivered the message," grinned Mornington. "But the man's coming, anyhow—a regular bulldog, and full of spite. He's goin' to make the Head pay for sackin' him from the school ten years ago. So he says, an' I know he means it."

How lucky it's a half-holiday to-morrow! I'm going to be on hand to see the fun."

"He, he, he!" chortled Tubby Muffin.

Jimmy Silver frowned. "The fellow will have to be stopped," he said. "The Head will telephone for the police."

"The police!" chuckled Mornny. "That's P.-c. Boggs, and Gummage major could knock him into the middle of next week with his little finger."

"The Sixth will chip in," said Raby.

Mornny laughed. "I don't envy them, if they try to handle a six-foot prize-fighter," he said. "He could handle Bulkeley like a baby. I can tell you, there's goin' to be a show to-morrow. Gummage major means business."

Jimmy Silver & Co. left the end study—leaving their tea unfinished—and joined the crowd of the Fourth in the passage. The passage was buzzing with excited voices; the news had spread. From one end of the school to the other, the fellows were discussing Gummage major, once of the Sixth, and his ferocious intentions. If Gummage major's desire was to create a sensation in his old school, certainly he had succeeded. From the captain of Rookwood, down to the smallest and inkiest fag, there was one name on every lip—and that was the name of Gummage.

The 2nd Chapter.

Nice for the Head!

"I am sorry!"

Dr. Chisholm spoke kindly enough. But there was an inflexible decision in his look and voice.

Mr. Dalton, the new master of the Fourth Form, bowed his head.

He was seated in the doctor's study, and in that calm and sedate apartment there was no trace of the excitement that reigned everywhere else in Rookwood School.

Apparently Dr. Chisholm had not yet heard of the return of Gummage major. Possibly he would have declined to be disturbed by the news, even if he had heard it.

"I am sorry, Mr. Dalton," he repeated. "I will say that you have given me every satisfaction during the short time you have been at Rookwood. As a Form-master, I have no fault to find with you—none whatever. I am sorry to part with you—sincerely sorry. But I fear that there is no help for it."

The young master was silent. His dismissal from Rookwood was a serious matter to him; such posts were not to be picked up every day. And he liked Rookwood; he liked his class; he was happy at the old school. But he was proud, too; and much as he would have liked to remain, he had no thought of asking it as a favour.

"I have taken time to consider the matter," went on the Head gently. "I will even say that I do not blame you very much. But there is the fitness of things to be considered. All the boys in the school are aware that you appeared in the boxing-ring at Bunbury in a fight with a professional boxer—"

"It was before I arrived here to take up my appointment, sir," said Mr. Dalton.

"A few hours before," said the

Head, "and it seems that some Rookwood boys were actually present and saw you there. You must see for yourself, Mr. Dalton, that I could not tolerate anything of the kind. You tell me that the affair was simply an ordinary boxing-match. There are many people who will describe it as a prize-fight. And I do not see much distinction myself—certainly you boxed in a public place for a purse of money. I am, I repeat, sorry; but in the circumstances, I do not see how you can remain at Rookwood as a master."

Richard Dalton rose to his feet. "Very well, sir," he said. "It is, of course, for you to decide. I am sorry to leave; but I am prepared to go immediately."

"You will take your time, Mr. Dalton; and so far as your work here is concerned, I shall always be pleased to give you a recommendation. But I—"

"I will leave to-morrow, sir," said Mr. Dalton. "It is not pleasant for me to remain here under notice of dismissal; and if I am to go, the sooner the better. Unless it will cause you serious inconvenience, I should prefer to leave to-morrow."

"My convenience need not be considered at all," answered Dr. Chisholm stiffly. "If you prefer it, let it be to-morrow, by all means."

"Very good, sir!"

Knock!

The door opened, and the flushed and troubled face of Sergeant Kettle appeared in the doorway.

Mr. Dalton passed the sergeant on his way out. Dr. Chisholm fixed a look of calm inquiry on the sergeant.

"What is it, Kettle?" he asked. Sergeant Kettle stammered and flushed. He had a message to deliver, but it was a very difficult message to deliver to such a man as the Head of Rookwood. Dr. Chisholm's glance grew colder and more surprised as Mr. Kettle stammered and hesitated.

"Well?" he snapped. "If—if you please, sir—" stammered the sergeant.

"You have not been drinking, I hope, Kettle?" said Dr. Chisholm icily.

"Oh, sir! No, sir! I—I—I've been to the village, sir—"

"Kindly tell me at once why you have come to my study, Kettle!" said the Head testily.

"It—it's young Gummage, sir—"

"Gummage?"

"Yessir!"

Dr. Chisholm elevated his eyebrows.

"I fail to understand you, Kettle. There is no boy in the school of that name. Are you referring to a boy whom I expelled from Rookwood for misconduct many years ago?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped the sergeant. "And why?"

"He's come back, sir—he's in Coombe now, staying at the Bird-in-Hand, sir!" stammered Mr. Kettle.

"Indeed?"

"You—remember, sir," mumbled the sergeant, "when he was expelled, sir, and flogged, he—he said he—"

"He was guilty of insolence," said the Head freezingly. "I do not care to recall his insolence, Kettle. Why do you mention the matter?"

"He's given me a message for you, sir," said the sergeant desperately. "Talked it out loud in the street, sir, afore a lot of Rookwood boys. He's coming up to the school to-morrow afternoon, sir!"

"He will not be admitted," said the Head. "You will mention to Mack that Mr. Gummage is not to be admitted to the school. He was a disgrace to Rookwood while he was here, and he will never be allowed to revisit the school so long as I am headmaster."

"He—he says, sir—"

"If you have anything to say, Kettle, say it at once!"

"He's got a dog-whip, sir—"

"What?"

"And—and he says he's coming up to-morrow, sir, to—to thrash you, sir, same as he said he would when he was kicked out, sir!" blurted out the sergeant.

It was out at last.

A trace of colour crept into Dr. Chisholm's cheeks. But that was the only sign he gave that the insolent message had impressed him at all. His manner was as calm and stately as ever.

"You should not have repeated his fresh insolence to me, Kettle," said the Head severely.

"But, sir—"

"I take no notice of it. The man is beneath my notice," said the Head. "That is all, Kettle!"

"But—but he means business, sir!" stammered the sergeant. "He's grown into a six-foot chap, sir, and he's been a prize-fighter since he left Rookwood. He's dangerous, sir!"

Dr. Chisholm's lip curled.

"You can scarcely suppose, Kettle, that I should be moved in any way by the threats of a ruffian?" he said.

"Nunno, sir; but—but—"

"You may go, Kettle."

"Yessir. But—but he's coming to—"

"You will tell Mack that he is not to be admitted!" said the Head. And with a wave of the hand he dismissed the sergeant.

There was nothing more to be said, and Sergeant Kettle quitted the study, sorely troubled in his mind.

It was all very well, the sergeant considered, for the Head to take this lofty and scornful tone; but when the prize-fighter arrived on the morrow, something had to be done with him. And Mr. Kettle was assured that he would arrive. For years Gummage major had nursed his old grudge against the headmaster who had expelled him, and now he had come back for vengeance—and stately and scornful looks were not likely to stop him.

Mr. Kettle proceeded to inform old Mack, the porter, at his lodge, that he was not to admit Gummage major on the morrow. Old Mack blinked at him.

"And 'ow am I to stop him, if he chooses to come in?" demanded old Mack.

The sergeant shook his head. "The 'Ead didn't say," he replied.

"He'd better say, if he wants the job done!" said old Mack tartly. "I'm paid to keep this 'ere gate, Mr. Kettle, not to scrap with prize-fighters at the age of sixty-three. Why, that feller Gummage could pick me up in one 'and, and you in the other, Mr. Kettle, and knock our 'cads together, if he liked!"

"And well I know it!" said Mr. Kettle.

"Well, then," argued old Mack, "all werry well for the 'Ead to say he ain't to be admitted. But 'ow am I to stop him? I arsk you that, sergeant."

"Don't ask me!" said the sergeant. "I ain't a blooming wizard, and I don't know."

"I know what the 'Ead ought to do—he ought to call in the police," said old Mack.

"He won't. He's too 'igh and proud to do it," said Mr. Kettle. "Besides, s'pose Gummage was only gassing, and don't come? We can't keep a policeman 'anging on 'ere all his blessed life, I s'pose?"

"Well, I'm going to speak to Mr. Boggs, and arsk him to drop in and take a drop with me to-morrow afternoon," said old Mack. "If the 'Ead won't, I will. And I'll lock the gate. More'n that I ain't paid to do. But if young Gummage begins ructions, the 'Ead will 'ave to deal with him. It ain't my job, nor yours neither, sergeant."

To which the sergeant assented heartily enough.

The 3rd Chapter.

Great Expectations!

Jimmy Silver & Co. were in a state of considerable excitement the following day.

In fact, there was excitement all through Rookwood School. Lessons that morning were taken in an atmosphere of subdued feverishness, as it were. All the fellows were thinking of the afternoon, and what it might bring.

After lessons some of the prefects consulted together, and Bulkeley and Neville decided that if the prize-fighter attempted violence they would have to chip in. But they did not look forward to the prospect with any joy. Sturdy fellow as Bulkeley was, he knew that the tremendous ruffian out like an infant. He was rather relieved when, after dinner, he noticed Police-constable Boggs drop in at old Mack's lodge. Though what Mr. Boggs could do against Gummage major, if he came, was rather a mystery. Unless his uniform and the terrors of the law scared off Gummage major, Mr. Boggs was not likely to be useful in the emergency.

After dinner there was a crowd of Rookwood fellows outside the gates watching the road, like Sister Anne, for the first sign of Gummage.

But they were not allowed to watch for long. Mr. Greeley, the master of the Fifth, came out and ordered them in, frowning. Then the gates were closed.

"Give Gummage major a chance when he comes, Mack!" grinned Mornington.

Old Mack shut the gates and turned the key. Jimmy Silver & Co. remained about the gateway, and more and more fellows joined them there. At any moment now the expelled Rookwooder, who had saved up his vengeance so long, might arrive; and most of the fellows wanted to be on the scene when he came.

There was a loud shout as a powerful figure loomed up at last, visible through the metal bars of the gate.

"Gummage major!" roared Mornington.

It was the prize-fighter. He did not look much like an old Rookwood boy. His face was marked by many signs of old combats, and his nose was broken. His eyes were small and glittering. He was dressed loudly, and wore a coloured muffler knotted round his bull-neck in lieu of a collar. It was pretty clear, from his looks, that George Gummage had gone to the bad since leaving Rookwood; or, rather, he had started to the bad at Rookwood, and gone to worse after leaving.

"Here he is!" chortled Tubby Muffin. "He, he, he!"

"Good old Gummage!" chuckled Peele.

The bell rang loudly in the porter's lodge, and old Mack came ambling out, with a scared look.

"Let me in!" hooted the visitor.

"You, Master Gummage?" asked old Mack, blinking at him.

"I'm Gummage—George Gummage! I've come back!" grinned the big man through the bars. "You haven't changed much, Mack. Let me in, old sport. I've got a pressing engagement with the Head."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got orders not to let you in, Master Gummage," said old Mack nervously. "Now do go away and be quiet."

Gummage laughed. "If you don't open this gate I'll come over the wall!" he said. "I don't care which. I've got to see the Head, Mack. You remember the old bird expelling me from the school—what?"

"Yes, sir; I remember," mumbled old Mack. "A young rip you was, too."

"I told him I'd come back and thrash him some day, didn't I, Mack?"

"You did, you young raskil!"

"Now I've come back to do it!" said Mr. Gummage cheerfully. "Are you letting me in, old bag-of-bones?"

"No, I ain't!" said Mack.

"Then I'm coming over!"

George Gummage moved along from gate, and swung himself on the top of the school wall. Then forth from the porter's lodge, like a lion from his lair, strode Police-constable Boggs, plump and majestic. Gummage, with one leg over, looked down at him, grinning. Mr. Boggs waved a large gloved hand at the returned Rookwooder.

"Clear hout!" he said. "If you step inside these 'ere presinks it will be my dooty to take you in charge, by horder!"

"How are you going to manage it, cocky?" asked Gummage major.

"Echo answers how!" murmured Arthur Edward Lovell. "If Boggy tackles that cove, I fancy he will bite off more than he can chew."

Gummage, evidently not scared by the majestic Boggs, dropped lightly within the school wall.

"Take him into custody, Mr. Boggs!" called out old Mack in a quavering voice.

Mr. Boggs advanced heroically upon the prize-fighter. He had his duty to do—or to attempt to do. George Gummage looked at him and lifted a large, clenched fist.

"Scuttle off!" he snapped.

"I takes you into custody for trespass, Mr. Gummage," said Mr. Boggs, "and if you resist the law—"

He loosened his truncheon.

Gummage major did not give him time to handle the truncheon. He came at Mr. Boggs like a bull, and what happened next the fat constable never knew. Something that seemed like an earthquake hit Mr. Boggs, and he woke up, as it were, to find himself on his back, gazing up at the sunny spring sky, with a general impression that the solar system had gone off with a loud explosion.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

Some of the juniors had had a vague idea of "rushing" the obstreperous old Rookwooder, but after that hefty drive the idea quickly died. For it was plain that the huge bruiser could have knocked them about like so many skittles.

Mr. Gummage glanced at the juniors, and laughed. He did not fear any interference from them.

"Ands off!" moaned Mr. Boggs, as the big man stooped over him. "I give you best! Oh crikey! 'Ands off!"

Gummage major laughed again, picked up the policeman, stout as he was, and pitched him into the lodge. Then he stepped towards the terrified porter. Old Mack did not wait for him. He bolted into his lodge like a rabbit into a burrow, and slammed the door, and locked and double-

bolted it. Old Mack had had enough of Gummage major.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gummage. And he strode off towards the School House, with an excited crowd of juniors following at his heels. Even the pending departure of Dicky Dalton was forgotten now in the tense excitement of the arrival of Gummage major.

The 4th Chapter. Simply Awful!

George Gummage came up the steps of the School House.

In the hall Bulkeley of the Sixth was waiting, with five other prefects of the Sixth Form. They were prepared to stand up in defence of their headmaster, and any ordinary individual would not have had much chance against half a dozen sturdy Sixth-Formers of Rookwood. But the big, broad-shouldered prize-fighter was no ordinary individual. He was, in fact, a rather extraordinary one.

"Get out!" said Bulkeley sharply.

"I'm here to see the Head—"

"We're here to stop you," said the Rookwood captain. "Get out!"

"Not half!" said the old Rookwooder.

And he rushed on. Six sturdy seniors closed on him desperately, and there was a struggle and a terrific uproar.

For a moment or two little could be seen but whirling arms and legs,

"They can't handle him!" panted Jimmy Silver. "Good heavens, what's going to happen now?"

"Nobody here can handle him," said Lovell. "Nobody but Mr. Dalton, anyhow, and he's sacked and going—"

Jimmy Silver jumped. "Dicky!" he exclaimed. It was like a brain-wave.

Without another word to his chums, Jimmy turned and darted to the staircase, and raced up the stairs.

He thumped frantically at the door of Mr. Dalton's room. The new master of the Fourth was there, putting the finishing touches to his packing. The station cab was coming for him at four. Jimmy thumped on the door, and hurled it open.

"Mr. Dalton!" he panted.

The Form-master, in his shirt-sleeves, was kneeling before an open trunk, packing a shirt into it. He stared round at the Fourth-Former in surprise.

"Silver," he ejaculated, "what do—"

"Oh, come, sir!" gasped Jimmy. "Gummage major—"

"What?"

"He's assaulting the Head, sir. Nobody can stop him. But you could, sir, if you liked. You could handle him, same as you did the Bunbury Pet, sir. Oh, do come!" gasped Jimmy incoherently.

Mr. Dalton rose quickly to his feet.

"I do not understand. Who is

Head!" he chuckled. "You remember me—what? George Gummage of the Sixth, whom you flogged and kicked out of Rookwood, ten years ago—what!"

The Head eyed him coldly. "I remember you, Gummage," he said. "You were a rascal at this school, and met a well-deserved punishment. You appear to have become a greater rascal since then, and a ruffian in addition. Leave my study at once!"

Gummage major chuckled. "Didn't I tell you I should come back and thrash you?" he demanded. "I'd have come back before but for the war. That kept me too busy for some years. But I never forgot you, old bird! Now I've come! Are you ready?"

"If you venture upon violence here, sir—" began the Head, with his most crushing dignity.

But no amount of dignity could have crushed Gummage major. He came towards the Head, grinning, and cracking his whip.

"Your turn now!" he said.

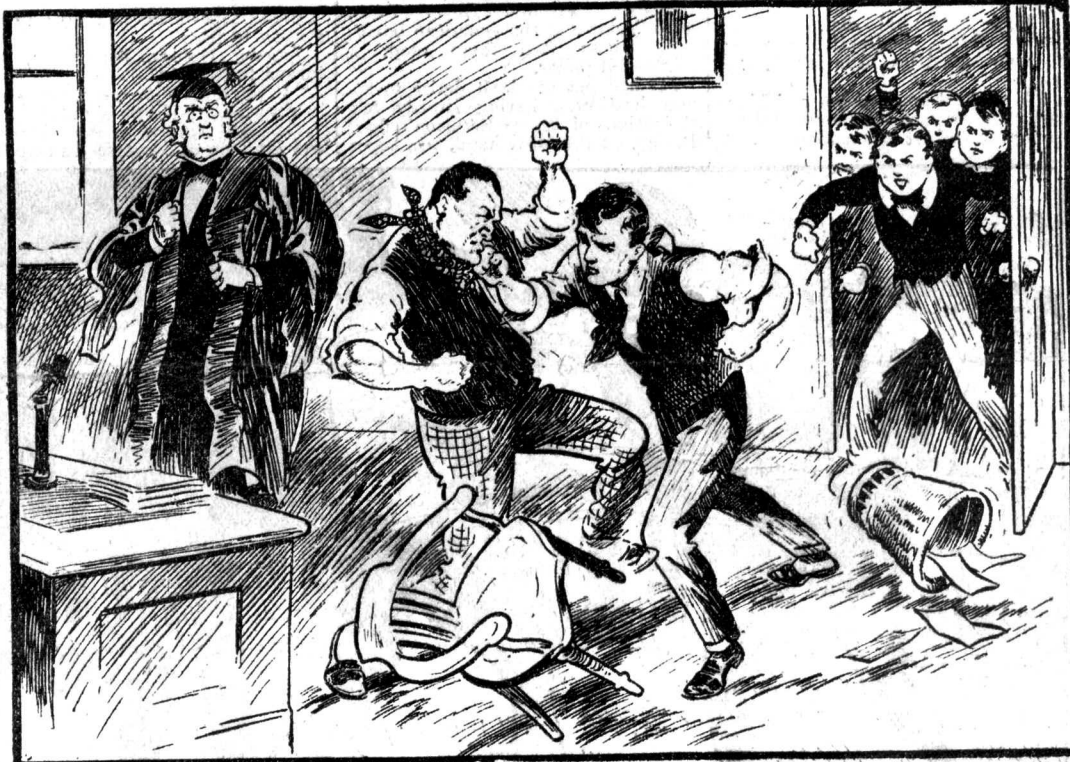
"Ruffian, hands off!"

"I reckon not!"

There was a sudden yell in the corridor.

"Dicky! Go for him, Dicky!"

Hasty footsteps approached the Head's study. Mr. Richard Dalton, in his shirt-sleeves, appeared in the doorway. He glanced at the Head and at the burly prize-fighter.



THE FIGHTING FORM-MASTER! The fight between the "Old Boy" and the young master looked as if it would be a lengthy affair, when with one tremendous blow Mr. Dalton lifted his opponent into the air and sent him crashing to the floor. Cheers rang out from the onlooking juniors and a sigh of relief escaped Dr. Chisholm.

and then Bulkeley and Neville went spinning away, crashing on the floor. Knowles and Carthew loosened their grasp and backed off. Lonsdale and Jones major, fighting off their feet and tossed away. Leaving the prefects scrambling and gasping, George Gummage strode on down the corridor towards the Head's study.

"Dr. Chisholm," he roared, "where are you? I've come back—George Gummage, that you sacked from the school ten years ago, you old rascal! Where are you hiding yourself?"

He crashed a heavy fist on the door of the Head's study.

The door was not locked. The Head of Rookwood was too proud to adopt such a measure. But certainly a locked door would not have stopped the vengeful Gummage.

The door flew open under his blow, and he strode into the study. Dr. Chisholm, pale and calm, rose to his feet to face him. From under his coat, the prize-fighter whisked out a dog-whip.

In the School House hall Bulkeley staggered up.

"Where is he?" he gasped.

"He's gone to the Head's study," exclaimed Mornington.

"Come on, you fellows!" panted Bulkeley.

He raced down the corridor. Neville followed him; the rest were too severely damaged.

Bulkeley and Neville rushed into the Head's study. In the passage the Rookwood fellows watched breathlessly.

Gummage major? What has happened?" he exclaimed.

Jimmy panted out a breathless explanation. Mr. Dalton understood in a few words.

"He's in the Head's study now, sir," wound up Jimmy, panting.

"He's got a dog-whip, and—"

Mr. Dalton, without even staying to put on his coat, darted out of the room. He took the stairs three at a time. Jimmy Silver, rushing after him, was left far behind.

The 5th Chapter. A Fight to a Finish!

Bump! Bulkeley of the Sixth came out of the Head's study and landed in the corridor.

Crash! Neville followed him out.

There was a buzz in the crowded corridor. The hapless prefects had fared ill in their last attempt to restrain Gummage major, once of the Rookwood Sixth.

"Now the Head's gettin' it!" murmured Mornington.

"We—we ought to chip in," muttered Lovell.

"What can we do?" said Raby.

"Oh, my hat! Who ever heard of such a thing! Let's look!"

The Rookwood fellows crowded along to the open doorway. They stopped there; they could not tackle the burly prize-fighter. Dr. Chisholm, standing at his writing-table, was pale, but still calm. Gummage major made the dog-whip whistle in the air.

"Now for you, my dear old

"Do you require my assistance, sir?" he asked quietly and politely.

Gummage major turned round. "Hook it!" he said briefly. "I don't want to hurt you, young man. But hook it while you're safe!"

Mr. Dalton did not heed him. His glance was fixed inquiringly upon the Head of Rookwood.

A flush crept into Dr. Chisholm's cheeks.

This was the master he had dismissed for having stood up in a fistical show in a boxing-ring. He had been right, in his own way. But it was only Mr. Dalton's fistical powers now that stood between the Head and a terrible humiliation he could scarcely have recovered from. He felt at that moment that he had not treated the young man generously, and he hesitated to ask assistance at his hands.

But there was no alternative. He shuddered at the sight of the dog-whip in George Gummage's powerful hand.

"Mr. Dalton," he said faintly, "this—this ruffian—"

"Leave him to me, sir," said the young Form-master quietly.

He strode into the study, and promptly placed himself between the Head and the threatening assailant. Dr. Chisholm stood, leaning one hand on the table, breathing hard. Gummage major came closer to Mr. Dalton, with a threatening glare.

"Get out!" he snapped.

"It is for you to get out," said Mr. Dalton calmly. "Otherwise I shall eject you. Take your choice!"

Gummage major grinned, and rushed on him. The next moment he

was flying backwards, to crash against the wall. The hands that had knocked out the Bunbury Pet had not lost their cunning.

"Well hit!" roared Lovell, in the doorway.

"Bravo, Dicky!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

Gummage major slid to the floor. He blinked dazedly for a few moments at the young man who had knocked him down. Then he leaped up, dropped the dog-whip, and tore off his coat. Without a word, but with a snarl of rage, he rushed at Mr. Dalton, and the next moment a wild and whirling fight was in progress in the Head's study.

Round the doorway the Rookwooders were crammed. Jimmy Silver & Co. had good places—behind them crowds more were wedged. Down the corridor the swarm was thick. The fellows who could not see into the study yelled excited inquiries, and Jimmy Silver & Co. yelled back.

Dr. Chisholm looked on at the scene like a man in a dream. It seemed, indeed, like some fearful dream to the stately old gentleman.

Mr. Dalton, powerful as he was, was half a head shorter than the burly prize-fighter, and three stone less in weight. But he stood up to his bulky assailant coolly, calmly methodically. Never once did George Gummage get past him; never once did he get near the Head.

There was severe punishment on both sides. Mr. Dalton's left eye closed, his nose was swollen, and a red stream trickled from his mouth. But the face of the prize-fighter looked like raw beef. Every blow from the fighting Form-master told, and, powerful as his antagonist was, it was soon clear that the fight was going against Gummage major.

He fought on gamely, however, standing up to Mr. Dalton so long as he could stand. It was a tougher "scrap" than the fight in the Bunbury Ring. At one time it seemed like "touch and go." But the fighting Form-master gradually gained the upper hand, though he paid for it dearly. He was almost tottering when at last George Gummage went to the floor with a crash, and failed to rise. The defeated prize-fighter lay and gasped.

"You've done me! Ow! You're a good man, you are!" he said faintly.

"Oh! Ow! Knocked out, by thunder! I'm done!"

There was a roar in the corridor.

"Dicky wins!"

"Good old Dicky!"

"Hurrah!"

"Bulkeley," said Mr. Dalton quietly, "help that man away, and see him off the premises, please."

"Certainly, sir!" said Bulkeley.

And Bulkeley and Neville raised the defeated bruiser from the floor, and led him out of the study, and the door closed after him. Mr. Dalton turned to the Head, with a rather painful smile.

"It is all right now, sir," he said. "But I was about to leave when Silver called me here. But, as you see, I am in hardly a condition for travelling. With your permission I will postpone my departure until to-morrow."

"Your departure!" exclaimed the Head warmly. "Mr. Dalton, can you speak of that now? You have saved me—from what, I shudder to think. Only to-day I told you that you could not remain at Rookwood as a master. Now I ask you to stay! I beg you to stay! You will not refuse—"

"But, sir—"

stammered Mr. Dalton.

"I will take no refusal," said the Head, taking the young master's hand and wringing it. "You shall stay. Come, sir, as a favour to me you will consent to remain at Rookwood?"

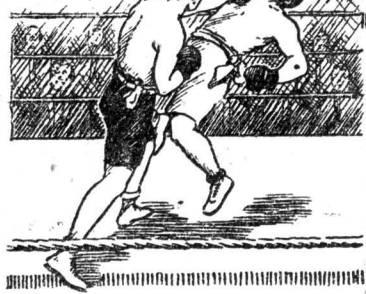
And Mr. Dalton stayed.

The affair of Gummage major was long the talk of Rookwood. The Old Boy had gone again—and in a sadly dilapidated state—and he did not reappear. He had evidently had enough. And Mr. Dalton stayed. For a week the young master was invisible to the general eye, keeping to his room till he recovered from the effects of that terrific combat. When he appeared in public again there were still signs of damage about him, and he was the hero of Rookwood. And when he came into the Fourth Form-room to take his class again the Fourth stood up, and for a full two minutes by the clock they cheered the Fighting Form-master.

THE END.

"Wrongfully Accused!" is the title of the next grand long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.

A GRIPPING TALE OF THE ROPED-SQUARE—WITH EVERY LINE A THRILL!

SPORTSMEN LTD.
by Walter Edwards.

The Penalty!

John Maynard, millionaire coal-owner of Coalham, accepted a challenge from Jackson Hooley, an American boxing promoter, the conditions being that he would find boxers to meet the American's men in the ring—and live.

The first contest was a draw. The second, between Jack Vernon, skipper of the Miners' Eleven, and Snowy White, a negro gained a very doubtful verdict. Jackson Hooley determined to win the third, between Bunny Scrutton and his man, Pete Harper. To this end he bribed one of his followers to dope Scrutton. Scrutton became blind, and the fight was stopped. Harper, to save himself from the hands of the angry spectators who wanted to swarm into the ring, gave information to the M.C. as to the author of the crime—Jackson Hooley. The latter, however, denied the accusation, and the audience ordained among themselves that Harper should pay the penalty of the crime.

A frightened shriek escaped Pete Harper's bloodless lips as the enraged crowd converged upon the ring. His limbs were shaking pitifully, and into his ashen features there crept a look terrible to behold.

Pete Harper was gazing into the cold face of Death.

Every passing second increased his peril, and the threatening shouts, coming nearer, ever nearer, made him cry for mercy.

"Don't let them get at me, sir!" he begged, again and again, turning his agonised features up to the M.C. "They'll kill me!"

"Let's out the cur!" shouted an indignant voice.

"At him!" cried a score of men, gripping the ropes, and preparing to leap into the ring.

Bunny Scrutton, who, although sightless, could follow everything, understood Harper's peril; he knew that anything might happen if the crowd put hands upon the perfidious American.

He turned his sightless eyes towards the M.C.

"You must stop this, sir!" he said quickly. "They mean murder; I can hear it in their voices! Speak to them; make them listen to reason. Tell them anything, but don't let them get at Harper!"

"No, sir; don't let them get at me—" began the American, when Harry Lake turned flashing, contemptuous eyes upon him.

"Shut up, you gum-chewing, clam-devouring cur!" he snapped viciously, bending over the grovelling Harper. "For two pins, I'd set about you myself, and by the time I'd finished with you that ugly dial of yours would look like the back of a bus!"

"Don't touch me!" whined the American. "Don't touch me!"

Harry Lake turned away in disgust. "Now, then, all together!" shouted one of the raiding party, hoisting himself into the ring.

Every second was precious if Harper was to be saved, and the M.C. decided upon a bold stroke. He strode towards the man who had climbed through the ropes, gripped him in strong, sinuous fingers, and swung him into the air.

The next moment the fellow was hurled bodily over the ropes, to fall upon a perfectly inoffensive old gentleman sitting in a ringside seat.

The happening was so unexpected that the onrushing men stopped dead in their stride, and gazed up at the M.C. in open-mouthed wonder.

"Gentlemen," cried the official, in even, mellow tones, "I beg of you not to let your anger get the upper hand of your common-sense. We are all thoroughly disgusted with Harper's despicable conduct, but we

shall not help matters by taking the affair into our own hands.

"I give you my word that he shall be punished.

"Also, I do not think we need despair about Scrutton's loss of sight, which is, I should imagine, only temporary. I have a faint recollection of a similar happening in the Bowery some years ago, and—"

"It's getting light!" broke in the voice of Bunny Scrutton. "There's a mist! Everything's blurred; it gets lighter, lighter, and I see—Ah!"

He pointed a shaking finger at Harry Lake.

"Can it be—can it be, I wonder? Surely I'm not mistaken? There's nothing like it on earth! Yes, yes, it's the same—the same!"

The little bald-headed trainer looked anxious; he feared that Bunny's lost sight had turned his brain, and that he was wandering.

"What's the same, old man?" he asked soothingly.

"Your ugly old dial, Harry!" shouted Bunny exultantly, throwing his arms round the little fellow. "I can see!"

The M.C., Jack Vernon, and Maynard crowded round the touse-headed youngster, whilst the audience rose

I must say that I've not had a fair run for my money, seeing that this white-livered dago down here"—he nodded towards Pete Harper, who was still lying upon the canvas—"got cold feet!"

"I can quite appreciate your position, Hooley," returned the millionaire quietly, "and I should not think of claiming this bout as a win. We must arrange another match."

"But why?" asked Bunny Scrutton, glancing up at John Maynard.

The millionaire coal-owner gave a puzzled frown.

"What do you mean—'Why'?" he asked.

"I mean," answered Bunny quietly, "that I'm more than willing to go on with the contest. In fact, I should very much like to settle the affair—"

"And settle Harper into the bargain!" grunted Harry Lake, glaring down at the American boxer, into whose face there crept a frightened pallor.

He had not the least desire to renew hostilities, having already felt the weight of Bunny Scrutton's fists. Bunny, on the other hand, was eager

Jackson Hooley nodded and glanced down at Pete Harper.

"Say, you get up!" he said, as though addressing a dog. "Get up and take all that's coming to you, and that's some, believe me!"

Pete Harper hesitated for a moment, and then rose slowly to his feet.

"Say, I ain't all-fired crazy about goin' through with this circus," he said, with a nervous glance at the set features of Bunny Scrutton. "I ain't feeling well!"

Bunny nodded his tousled head and looked sympathetic.

"Ever felt worse than you do now?" he asked.

"I sure ain't!" declared Harper, hoping that the youngster would cry the match off.

"Well," said Bunny, "you're going to before I've finished with you!"

Pete scowled as he looked at Jackson Hooley.

"Say—" he began.

"Get to your corner!" snapped the American promoter.

Harper's face was ashen, and the light of cowardice showed in his small eyes as he walked to his corner.

Luther McGlosky, Harper's principal second, grinned as he swung the swivel-seat round.

"That kid's goin' all out to smash you this time, Pete!" he said encouragingly. "He means to knock you through the building! You sure ain't going to live long enough to tell the doctor your name!"

Pete Harper made no reply; he was a slave to fear.

Jackson Hooley, meanwhile, had turned to the M.C.

"If you'll make an announcement," he drawled, "we'll go ahead."

The M.C. turned to the "house," and the hum of conversation stopped.



WITH THE RAW 'UNS!

"Seconds out! Time!" No sooner had these words left the time-keeper's mouth than the two giants walked from their corners with the firm intention of fighting to a terrible finish!

to its feet and gave voice as one man.

Vociferous cheers made the arc-lamps dance and quiver, whilst Bunny's friends gripped both his hands and threatened to reduce them to a pulp.

The excitement was wild—electrical—and beaming faces could be seen on every hand.

Jackson Hooley, the American promoter, strode across to Bunny, and held out his slim, powerful hand.

"Say," he drawled smilingly, "I should like to say how tickled I am that you're all right again, son! Shake!"

Bunny Scrutton looked searchingly into the lean features, only to find them set in an inscrutable mask. The youngster had taken an instinctive dislike to the promoter right from the moment he had set eyes upon him, but he could not very well refuse to accept the proffered palm.

"I'm sure you're pleased about it," he said slowly. "I thought you would be!"

A shadow passed across the American's keen eyes as the youngster said the words; he wondered if Bunny had reason to suspect treachery.

Hooley turned to John Maynard.

"Waal, sir," he drawled, "I guess this is another win for you, although

for the fray, and he determined not to be denied.

"Well, sir, what about it?" he demanded, looking from Maynard to Jackson Hooley.

Hooley, who knew there could only be one ending to the affair, would like to have backed out, yet he did not see how he could do so under the circumstances. Bunny was badly handicapped by his terrible ordeal, whilst Harper had more than recovered from any punishment he had received at the youngster's hands in the first round of the contest.

The American promoter shrugged his shoulders.

"Say, that's real sporting of you," he drawled; "but you're sure taking some risk in goin' through with the business. Why not let me find another boxer for you—a clean fighter? You sure don't want to soil your gloves on this skunk?"

He touched Harper contemptuously with the toe of his evening shoe.

"As a matter of fact," said Bunny Scrutton, with a grim smile, "that's just what I want to do. I'll soil my gloves on him, never fear!"

"What do you say, Maynard?" asked Hooley.

"I'm willing to let the contest go on," said Maynard readily.

"Gentlemen," he cried, "Scrutton wishes to proceed with the contest and—"

A roar of cheering and handclapping rang through the hall, and the official decided that no further statement was necessary.

Bunny Scrutton, Harry Lake, and Jack Vernon walked to their corner; whilst Maynard, Jackson Hooley, and the M.C. quitted the ring.

"Do you feel all right now, Bunny?" asked Lake, flexing the youngster's leg muscles.

Bunny gave a grim smile.

"I feel so fit that I'm almost sorry for Harper," he said.

Then came the gong.

"Seconds out!"

Bunny was on his feet in a flash, and was almost across the ring before Harper was pushed out of his seat by McGlosky.

Bunny's first blow sent his man against the ropes, and Harper covered up, hiding his jaw behind his gloves. This fact did not worry Bunny, who promptly played to the body, landing with lefts and rights in a manner that made Pete gasp and wince.

"Fight, you cur!" shouted Jackson Hooley, losing all control of himself. "He can't eat you!"

As a matter of fact, Bunny Scrutton proceeded to do everything other

than eat his man, and the end of the round found Pete reduced to a state of torpor.

He managed to get to his corner, however, to be received by the grinning McGlosky.

"The feller wot told you that you're a fighter misinformed you, Pete," he said, wagging a towel. "You sure don't know the first letter of the boxing alphabet!"

Pete Harper groaned; he was broken in spirit.

The minute rest passed all too quickly for the American, and he looked tired and apprehensive when he answered the gong.

"Fight him, you boob!" hissed Jackson Hooley from the ringside. "Fight, or quit!"

Pete decided to fight, for he did not wish to get into the bad books of the promoter, who was a power in the American boxing world.

He dropped into a crouch as he advanced, and no sooner was Bunny within distance than he lashed out with a left that was perilously low.

Bunny stepped back, and then replied with a right and left to the head. These blows, and the fact that he missed his swing, appeared to rouse Harper, for he stepped in quickly and began to use both hands in a manner that brought a gasp of surprise from the packed "house" and a satisfied smile to the lips of Bunny Scrutton.

He was more than pleased that his man was going to put up a fight. Bunny disliked punishing a beaten opponent. He meant to thrash Harper in any case, for he could not forget the fellow's treachery in dopping the water in the pail.

The two men stood toe to toe, and exchanged blows with clockwork regularity.

Left, right; left, right!

Pete Harper's small eyes held a wild light, and his thin lips were drawn back in a snarl. Sheer desperation showed upon his features.

He was making a last bid for victory, and if he failed—! The thought made him fight with the frenzy of a madman, and so savage was his attack that Bunny Scrutton was forced to give ground.

Jackson Hooley's keen eyes were glinting with excitement.

"Fight him! Fight him!" he cried in a subdued voice. "You've got him, Pete! Get him on the run!"

Pete Harper was a hurricane fighter for the moment, but Bunny Scrutton knew that he could not last at the present pace. The youngster was in no wise worried, and he saw to it that he did not ship any blows upon a vulnerable spot. He received punches upon his shoulders and arms, but the flying gloves never found his "point."

A minute from the gong found Pete breathing hard, whilst the power behind his blows was reduced to an almost negligible quantity, and their speed slackened perceptibly.

A grim smile twisted Scrutton's lips, and he stepped forward.

A second later the position of affairs had been reversed, and the American was giving ground before a shower of mighty blows that crashed through his guard with terrible effect.

Bleeding from the mouth, with an eye that was slowly closing, Pete Harper was forced round the ring, a grunting, unpleasant cough escaping his swollen lips each time Bunny Scrutton's gloves found their billet.

And that was often.

The American was a pitiable sight, but his young opponent could find not a grain of compassion for him. Bunny could only remember that, even at this very moment, he might have been sightless, a helpless creature to be led by the arm, an object of pity.

The mere thought brought an angry flush to his set features; and Harper, seeing the flush, backed away in alarm, with a pleading look in his small eyes.

"Harper," said the youngster, in grim and terrible accents, that turned the American's craven heart to water, "you're going to pay the penalty!"

The American backed away to the centre of the roped square, whilst Bunny followed him like a shadow, the incarnation of Retribution.

Not a blow was struck for a full two seconds, for Bunny was measuring his man for a knock-out, and Harper had not spirit enough to return to the attack.

Then the youngster's devastating left flashed forward, pushed out with all the power of his splendid body; but it did not connect, for Pete Harper gave a frightened cry and dropped to the canvas, where he remained, flat on his back, with his wild eyes glaring up at the youngster standing over him.

"Stand back, Scrutton!" came the warning.

Bunny stepped to the ropes, whilst the droning voice of the timekeeper ticked off the seconds.

Pete Harper was blinking up at the lights, but he made no attempt to get to his feet.

Jackson Hooley, leaning forward in his seat, and with a hideous expression upon his lean features, brought his fist down upon the edge of the ring.

"Get up and fight, you boob!" he shouted angrily.

Pete did not move, however.

"Eight, nine—"

A breathless pause.

"Out!"

Thus ended one of the most sensational boxing contests ever staged at the Imperial Sporting Club.

A Fresh Challenge!

John Maynard, the millionaire coal-owner, walked up the broad stone steps of the Imperial Sporting Club, nodded to the commissioner, and passed through the door which that gorgeously-attired attendant swung open for him.

An obsequious servant relieved him of his hat and coat, and then he strolled away in the direction of the smoking-room. A babble of voices came to his ears as he neared the comfortable apartment, and no sooner did he step across the threshold than a tall, well-set-up man of military appearance called him by name.

"Ah, we were just talking about you, John!" he said smilingly.

"Talk of the rest— But you know the rest," laughed the millionaire. "And why, pray, am I honoured in this manner?"

He sank into a deep saddlebag chair, and selected a cigar with the care of a connoisseur.

"It seems to us, John," said Major Fortescue, "that you stand a very good chance of bagging the thousand pounds from the American fellow."

"From Hooley?" Maynard nodded. "Yes, luck has been with me up to the present."

"And I don't see why it shouldn't continue to be with you, Maynard," put in a member, the editor of a London sporting paper. "Hooley appears to have come across with the usual Yankee bluff, but he ran against the wrong person when he met you!"

"Have you got any other good youngsters up your sleeve, John?" asked Fortescue.

The millionaire smiled. "I venture to predict that I can always find boxers who are good enough for anything that Hooley can produce," he replied. "Coalham is famous for its coal, its footballers, and its boxers."

"But it couldn't turn out a real class fighter until the moon grows horns!" drawled a voice.

Every head turned in the direction of the door, to find the lean form of Jackson Hooley standing there. The keen-faced American had a cigar jutting from the corner of his thin lips, and his eyes were smiling in a mocking, challenging manner.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Hooley?" said John Maynard. "I don't quite understand you."

The promoter strolled into the room—he had been elected an honorary member of the club—with an easy, insolent air.

"I thought you would have done so, sirrah," he drawled, "seeing you are one of the much-lauded bulldog breed! You were talking about your boxers, and I said that you couldn't find a real fighter with a magnifying-glass!"

"Go on!" said John Maynard quietly.

"Waal, I see that you don't quite get me yet," continued Jackson Hooley, glancing at the glowing end of his black cigar.

"Boxing's just a matter of tricks and ringcraft—child's play compared with real fighting—the bare knuckle stuff," he went on. "I was out at a place called Starlight Creek a few months ago, and I saw a sight that was good for sore eyes, and something that you wouldn't see in this little old country of yours in twenty years."

"What did you see, sir?" asked Major Fortescue.

"I saw a real bare-knuckle scrap, sir," said Jackson Hooley—"a fight with the raw 'uns! And didn't them fellows show that they were made of the real stuff! They hammered away at each other like champions, and the scrap didn't end till one of 'em was put down for the count in the twenty-fifth round! What do you think of that for sheer grit?"

He glanced round at his hearers.

"You ain't got a fighting man in England—"

"Pardon me, Mr. Hooley!" broke in John Maynard quietly. "Do I understand that you have a bare-knuckle fighter in your 'string'?"

Jackson Hooley nodded his sleek head.

"Sure!" he answered. "Wild Jake Starmer's down at my training-camp at Billington at this very moment. And he's sure eating his head off for a fight."

The millionaire puffed thoughtfully at his cigar, whilst the members gazed at his handsome face and tried to read his thoughts.

He looked up at last and fixed his clear eyes upon the American promoter's lean features.

"I am inclined to resent the manner in which you spoke about Englishmen, Mr. Hooley," he said slowly.

"Every word's true, ain't it?"

asked the promoter, thinking he was bluffing the millionaire into a bare-knuckle contest.

"That has to be proved," returned John Maynard, still in a very quiet voice. He looked up at the American, and there was a curious, smiling light in his eyes.

"Mr. Hooley," he went on, "you must imagine that I am a very dense individual if you think that I cannot see through your—er—bluff. You are anxious to arrange a fight with the raw 'uns—I think that is the term—because you think that it will be a walk-over for your man."

"Say, draw it mild!" protested the American. "It's up to you, anyway!"

"It is," agreed John Maynard, "and I imagine that I shall be able to find a man to accommodate Mr. Wild Jake Starmer."

A bright May morning, an hour after dawn, found most of the members of the Imperial Sporting Club gathered about a copse upon John Maynard's Sussex estate.

They had travelled down from town to witness a bare-knuckle fight between Wild Jake Starmer and Ben Briggs, a giant collier, who had consented to meet the American under Prize Ring rules.

Ben was a fellow who had the greatest contempt for gloved fights. He considered boxing a game for schoolgirls and children.

"Men should fight with their hands," he was wont to declare. "Good, hard fists can do some damage. That's what they're for!"

There was much activity inside the copse.

A number of men were working in a clearing, driving in stakes, and roping them in a manner which proved that this was not the first occasion upon which they had erected a prize-ring.

"Here's John and his man," said Major Fortescue, as the millionaire and Ben Briggs came striding towards the copse. The collier was clad in an overcoat, but it was easy to see that he was a veritable giant of a man. His face was rugged and clean-shaven, whilst his bullet head was closely-cropped.

The lips were a straight line, and one could not possibly conceive their curving into a smile.

Briggs seldom smiled. Life was a serious business with him. Whippet-racing, football, boxing made not the slightest appeal to him, and the only time he was happy was when some foolish person was misguided enough to try conclusions with the "raw 'uns."

It was then that Ben Briggs enjoyed himself. The other man seldom, if ever, showed the slightest signs of hilarity.

Jackson Hooley, Luther McGlosky, and Wild Jake Starmer followed almost immediately, and one swift, expert glance told the collier that here was a man worthy of his steel.

The "wild" gentleman had a granite-like face that looked as though it had been poured into a mould, and set. It was scarred in a dozen places, and bushy eyebrows almost obscured the small, twinkling eyes.

Wild vaulted clean over the ropes and strode away to a corner, taking not the slightest notice of the assembled sportsmen.

Maybe he hoped to bluff Ben Briggs, in which case he was doomed to disappointment. The taciturn collier was not in any way temperamental. Bluff left him cold.

He slipped out of his overcoat, and the members of the Imperial Club could scarcely suppress a gasp of amazement and admiration as they let their eyes rest upon his perfect body.

The muscles rippled under a smooth, alabaster skin, upon which there was scarcely a sign of hair. Briggs was a perfect man.

Wild Jake Starmer also disrobed, and it was at once seen that his body was matted with coarse hair, a striking contrast.

He was a powerful fellow, and there was an air about him which proved that the possibility of failure had not entered his head.

The preliminaries were soon over, and the silence was broken only by the excited chirping of the birds in the trees.

John Maynard and his friends crowded round the crude ring, and waited for the signal from Major Fortescue, who had agreed to referee the fight.

A couple of seconds later the two giants walked from their respective corners, and the fight with the raw 'uns was in progress!

(More of this wonderful boxing story will appear in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND. Order your copy TO-DAY.)

Choosing a Career!



No. 7.

IN THE ROYAL NAVY.

There are excellent prospects in the Navy for keen, hard-working lads. They must, however, be possessed of very good characters, be able to pass the physical and eyesight tests, and must be not less than 15½ years old.

Ordinarily, a boy is required to sign on for twelve years' service, commencing as from the age of eighteen. He must be the son of a British-born subject, and a certificate to this effect, or a sworn declaration made before a magistrate by the candidate's parent or guardian, is required.

On first joining, the new recruit is rated officially as a second-class boy, and his pay is 7s. a week, with, of course, free rations. After a while he is promoted to first-class boy, when his pay is nearly doubled—12s. 3d. per week; and at the age of eighteen, or sooner in some instances, he becomes an ordinary seaman, drawing 19s. 3d. a week.

The next step upwards is to be able seaman, then leading seaman, petty officer, and chief petty officer, each advance in rating carrying with it a corresponding increase in pay. It should also be noted that a boy, on first joining, is provided with a free outfit, and receives thereafter what is known as a "kit upkeep allowance" to maintain it.

For convenience' sake, we speak of life in the Navy as a career. In reality it affords a wide and varied choice of careers to an ambitious youngster anxious to get on.

In the old days a sailor was exactly what the name implies; that is to say, his work had to do mainly with sails—reefing them, bending them, and so on—and with the ropes and rigging which upheld and controlled them.

Nowadays all this is altered. Although we still speak of a naval seaman as a "sailor," the word is really a misnomer, since the modern fighting-ship possesses no sails, and his work, therefore, cannot possibly have anything to do with them.

Instead, he has to learn an immense variety of things that were quite unknown to the sailors of Nelson's day; and, in addition, he is usually a specialist in some one branch of the science of naval warfare.

What this branch shall be is largely dependent on what a boy's bent is on joining, his training before joining, his educational qualifications, and so forth. The choice open to him covers a wide ground. He may become, for instance, a stoker, a steward, a wireless telegraphist, signalman, writer, shipwright, engine-room artificer, ordnance artificer, cook, sick-berth attendant, electrical artificer, or any one of a number of other things.

In the beginning, however, every recruit goes through much the same routine. He is first drafted, in all probability, to one of the great naval training barracks at Chatham, Portsmouth, Devonport, or elsewhere, or he may possibly be sent to a naval training-ship.

The difference between the two is not so great as might be supposed, for the life in each instance is so arranged as to resemble as nearly as possible life on a man-of-war. His

arrival in barracks, for instance, is called "coming aboard." If he wishes to go into the town of an evening he applies for "shore leave." His hours of rest and duty are regulated, not by the familiar clock, but by the number of strikes on a bell; and when his day's work is over, and the "Last Post" is sounded, he retires, not to his bed, but to his hammock.

The work he is called upon to perform is hard, but varied and interesting. He learns, for instance, something of gunnery, how to splice a rope and lower a boat, is initiated into the mysteries of blocks and davits and the various tackle pertaining to them, and, in addition, he has to spend an hour or so each day in the gymnasium, where he is put through courses of Swedish drill and other similar exercises designed to make him strong, supple, and agile.

The rates of pay for fully-trained men range from about £1 10s. a week for able seamen up to approximately £3 a week for chief petty officers. This is, of course, in addition to free rations, and kit upkeep allowance.

Considerable additions to pay, ranging from about 2s. up to 16s. a week, can also be earned by qualifying in gunnery, torpedo, and other special training courses, and "good conduct pay" is issued at the rate of 1s. 9d. a week for each good conduct badge. Volunteers for the Submarine Service, if accepted, are likewise entitled to special allowances, varying from 5s. 3d. a week for boys up to 17s. 6d. a week for other ratings.

As regards the chances of promotion, up till comparatively recently it was practically impossible for an ordinary seaman to rise above warrant rank. Now, however, a certain number of commissions are reserved for lower-deck men, many of whom, after passing the necessary tests, are to-day serving as lieutenants and lieutenant-commanders.

There is, therefore, nothing to prevent a lad from raising himself by his own efforts to a position of dignity and comparative affluence. "Others have done it; why shouldn't I?" Let this be your motto.

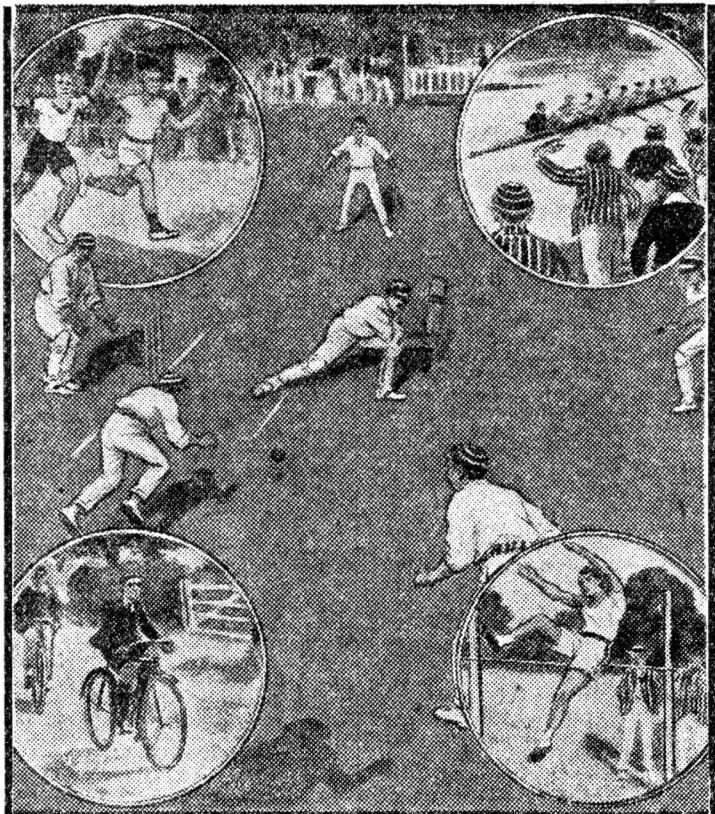
In conclusion, let me add a word in correction of the impression—still prevalent in certain quarters—that the naval "Jack Tar" is recruited mainly from amongst wastrels in other walks of life.

This may have been wholly true years ago. It is not even partially true to-day. On the contrary, the highest possible testimonials as to character are insisted upon in the case of every recruit, and no boy who has been in prison or in a reformatory is eligible under any circumstances whatsoever.

In short, it is no longer the bad boy of the family who goes to sea, but the good boy—the pick of the bunch.

(The Editor of the BOYS' FRIEND will be pleased to give further advice on this subject to readers requiring it. Letters should be addressed to "The Editor, BOYS' FRIEND, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.," and the envelope marked "Royal Navy" in the top left-hand corner.)

"HURRAH FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS!"



Reproduction of next week's cover of the

"BOYS' HERALD"

In which this great new feature appears.

OUT TO-MORROW.

PRICE 1½d.

RESULT OF "BOYS' HEROES" COMPETITION No. 15.

In this competition no competitor sent in a correct solution of the pictures. The first prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to A. McLeod, 152, Molyneux Road, Kensington, Liverpool, whose solution contained one error.

The three prizes of a tuck hamper each have been awarded to Stanley Barrie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan; James Lynch, 8, Greenhough Street, Ancoats, Manchester; Bernard Wallis, 14, Egerton Road, Bishopston, Bristol, whose solutions contained two errors each.

The eight prizes of 5s. each have been added together and divided among the following competitors in order of merit: Wm. H. Grant, 91, Fisher Street, Dennistoun, Glasgow; Wm. C. Barrie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan; T. Coleman, 4, Delhi Place, Telegraph Street, Portsmouth; A. Brown, Forthview Cottage, Polmontside Square, Polmont Station, N.B.; Nellie A. Ball, Nubbeck, Hex-

ham; H. Halliday, 12, Military Road, South Shields; Alice McIntyre, 19, Kennedy Drive, Partick, Glasgow; E. Daley, 17, Polefield Road, Heaton Park, Manchester; Fred Bevan, 519, Fishponds Road, Bristol; C. McCarthy, 44, Norman Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow; John Currie, 3, Teviot Row, Weensland, Hawick; Don Leed, 27, Whitefield Avenue, Cambuslang, Glasgow; Mary Lister, 1255, Dumbarton Road, Whiteinch, Glasgow; H. A. Parsons, 10, Corby Road, Mapperley, Nottingham; Joseph Kennedy, 72, Morningside Road, Edinburgh; J. McCracken, 2, Auldhouse Avenue, Pollokshaws, Glasgow.

The correct solution is as follows: The Easter holiday is upon us, and if we have sunshine, large numbers of young people will have a happy time. This picture puzzle will assist you all to spend at least one interesting hour, and that hour may be worth £5 to you. Try it!

HEALTH & EXERCISE

Conducted by PERCY LONGHURST.

If you are in need of any advice concerning health and general fitness write to "The Health Editor," THE BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. All queries will be personally answered by Mr. Longhurst. Seize this opportunity of securing first-rate information and advice FREE!

Balancing Exercises.

Every athlete, especially the boxer—not so much; the wrestler—a very great deal—knows the value of being able to maintain a good balance. A very great deal of the success of jujitsu tricks depends upon the perfect control of balance. So does success in high jumping, pole leaping, and also dancing.

Balance means control of muscle, and this is something that has to be learned. To the ordinary person an act of balancing is never mechanical—that is to say, done without thinking about it. To the juggler, who puts in days and weeks learning a trick, balance does become mechanical, but only because of the enormous amount of practice he has put in. Walking is really an act of balancing the body, and we walk mechanically, without the brain taking part in the act; but that is only because we do such a lot of walking. You can stand on one leg without thinking very hard what you are doing, but if you were balancing yourself on one foot on a narrow pole several feet from the ground, you'd be thinking hard all the time what you were doing. Your brain would be taking a decidedly active interest in the work your muscles were doing.

That's what I mean by saying that balancing has to be learned. And it is an art worth learning since, apart from anything else, it develops increase of muscular control. And the chap who has the greatest control over his muscles will get more work out of them than another who is lacking in that control.

Here are a few balancing exercises worth any athlete's trouble to practise.

Rise on the toes as high as possible, and hold the position for several seconds. Then walk forward and backward. Walk on the heels forward and backward, keeping knees straight. Stand with arms extended sideways at level of shoulders, raise right leg as high as possible, and extend toes forward. Count one, two, and then foot back to ground. Then the left foot the same. Lean head and shoulders backwards as foot rises. Exactly similar movement, but with legs raised behind. Keep knee straight. Don't lean forward more than possible.

Stand erect, feet together. Raise right foot until knee—bent—is as high as stomach. Don't lean forward. Grasp foot with right hand from inside knee. Now bend the supporting leg and try to touch the ground with the right knee. Rise without releasing foot or losing balance. Same with left leg.

Similar exercise, but leg raised behind, foot seized with left hand; lower, touch with knee, and rise as before.

Good Temper.

There is a piece of advice that invariably finds its way into all books giving advice and instruction upon boxing. It is: KEEP YOUR TEMPER.

It is a good, highly-necessary piece of advice, for there is perhaps no sport in which there are such great temptations towards losing control of oneself. Moreover, for a boxer to lose his temper is for him to offer deliberately an advantage to his opponent. When a boxer loses his temper he begins to hit wildly, to forget all about his guarding, his footwork, all

the nice, stylish, and clever points of the game. In nine cases out of ten he is quickly and thoroughly made aware of the fact that in boxing to lose control of one's temper doesn't pay.

Self-Defence Problem.—Counter to the Come-along Hold.

A gratifying number of solutions to the above problem have been received, and this despite the fact that the hold is one of the kind which is so very conclusive that no satisfactory counter appears to exist.

But it does, and this is it. Immediately the hold is put upon you, turn quickly to your left—it is your left arm that is locked, remember!—tensing muscles of left arm to their utmost. Your right hand is swiftly placed beneath the chin of the attacker, butt of hand pressing upon the jawbone, and at the same moment your left knee is jabbed behind back of attacker's right knee. A backward jerk of attacker's head, combined with the knee stroke, will bring him to the ground, the pressure on your elbow-joint released, while you so come down that your knee lands on his solar plexus.

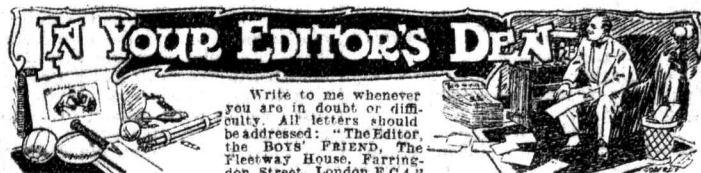
There's the correct solution, the best that native jiu-jitsu experts have discovered, but I'm not going to tell you that it's extremely easy a counter to make use of. It isn't. One has to act like lightning and with complete accuracy. When speed and accuracy are combined, it is an easy counter.

"Oh, but while I'm getting to the fellow's chin he's breaking my arm!" will be the objection of some.

Quite so! If you're slow he will be in a position to damage your limb. Everything depends upon rapidity of execution.

The solution given by a Birmingham reader is identical with the correct one; so it is to William Cattell, of 37, Tat Bank Road, Oldbury, near Birmingham, that I am awarding the prize.

(The column which keeps you fit—"Health and Exercise"—every Monday in the BOYS' FRIEND.)



Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. All letters should be addressed: "The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4."

NEXT MONDAY'S ISSUE

will contain the usual complement of good stories, articles, etc., among which the following are worthy of special mention:

A fine, long instalment of our new serial—

"SPORTSMEN, Ltd!"

By Walter Edwards,

This yarn has proved to be one of the biggest hits of the year. Letters in praise of it are rolling in daily from readers all over the country—yes, and the Colonies, too. When readers start and pay the Government twopence postage to tell us what they think of a story it is a sure sign that that story is SOME hit, and then a few!

Many readers thought when "The Miners' Eleven" came to an end that Mr. Edwards would probably rest from his labours, and you should have felt the sigh of relief that went up when "Sportsmen, Ltd." made its appearance. I say "felt," and I do not exaggerate.

Another item that is causing a lot of my older readers to sit up and beg for more is the new series, entitled:

"CHOOSING A CAREER!"

These articles were the outcome of the many letters I received, asking for information as to how to enter the various trades and professions. The article for next week will give you all the information you want on how to become

A VETERINARY SURGEON.

This calling is one of the few left that is not overcrowded, and although its followers need no little amount of brain and skill, I know for a fact that a large number of my readers are desirous of entering this profession. And as to the "brain and skill" part of it, that you all have, or you would be satisfied with any old paper for your week's reading. And, of course, you are not. You demand the best, and you get it in the BOYS' FRIEND.

By this time you will all have read the first of the splendid new series of cricket articles from the pen of the famous Middlesex Eleven man—H. W. Lee.

These articles are exclusive to the "B.F." Why? Because all good things find their way into the columns of— But need I mention it? 'S obvious!

Here is a very useful little paragraph from a country reader. My contributor is H. C. Westcott, of Little Langford, Bow, North Devon, and I am awarding him a cash prize of 5s. for the following article on the care of

TAME PIGEONS.

Boys living a little way out of towns, and with gardens, will find pigeons both profitable and easily managed. Even in the back-yards of London itself a pigeon-cote can be built without difficulty. But pigeons are quiet birds, and thrive best in a quiet spot.

The cote should not be small. Small dwellings spoil the tail and wing feathers. The house must be cleaned once or twice weekly. Remember, as in all things, cleanliness is imperative! The cote should also be frequently lime-washed to prevent insect pests. If your birds have a worried, dragged look, be sure they are suffering from this, and they will not thrive.

Pigeons drink a great deal, and enjoy a bath. The best way to arrange this is to sink a suitably-large vessel, preferably a glazed earthenware dairy-pan, into the ground, build a little rockery around it, and fill it with water. Your trouble will be amply repaid by your feathered friends' delight at being able to bath and perch on the rockery to dry.

Stock your pigeon-house in May or August. Young birds are then plentiful and quite cheap. The young pigeon which squeals longest and loudest is usually the hen. To pair your birds at the age of six months, place them in a separate coop, and allow them to feed from the same vessel. In a few days they become inseparable, and may be given their freedom.

The hen lays two eggs, usually male and female, and sits for about eighteen days, during which time she

is to be kept quite quiet and free from alarms.

Feed your pigeons on wheat, barley, crushed maize, beans, peas, and almost any seeds. They are also fond of picking over piles of broken brick.



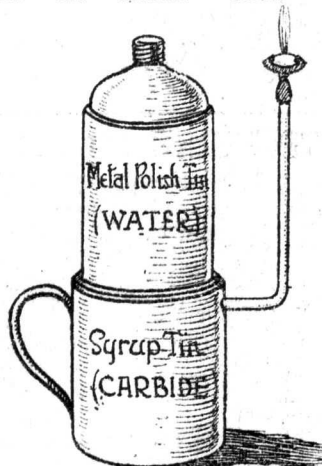
A Good Type of Dove-Cote.

Should anyone wish to keep pigeons let me give him one word of advice. See your pigeon has not the worried, dragged look mentioned before, and should his fancy light on the "carrier" or "homing" pigeon, see that the red ring around the pupil of the eye is of a deep colour.

A. J. Forbes, of 454, Holburn Street, Aberdeen, sends me the following article on how to make an

ACETYLENE LAMP.

This is an idea for an acetylene gas lamp that I am sending you. I have tried it and found it to work successfully. Take an old syrup tin and pierce a hole about an eighth of an inch down from the top of the tin. Get a piece of brass or copper zinc piping with a gas thread screwed on one end. Solder the other end of the pipe into the hole in the tin. The threaded end is to take an ordinary acetylene burner which may be obtained from any garage at the cost of a few pence. When fitting be careful that the fit is a good one, or the gas will escape before it reaches the burner proper, thus causing an indifferently light. Then take a Brasso tin with a screw top, and cut out the bottom. Solder the



The Lamp when Complete.

Brasso tin to the lid of the syrup tin, and then pierce a very small hole in the lid of the syrup tin with a very fine needle. Fill the Brasso tin with water, and put some carbide in the syrup tin. Then fix the lid and Brasso tin tightly to the syrup tin.

A small air inlet hole should be bored with a very fine needle in the top of the screw cap of the water container.

A handle may be added if required, out of any piece of tin or other metal, soldered to the syrup tin. The lamp may also be painted if desired. When finished it will appear as in the accompanying diagram.

I have sent my reader a cash prize of 5s. for the above little paragraph, which I am sure will interest all my readers of a mechanical turn of mind.

STRINGER!

I should like to draw my chums' special attention to the topping sporting story now running in our companion paper, the "Boys' Herald." It is called "Stringer, the Demon Bowler," and is creating a tremendous stir. Stringer is a queer and fascinating character, whom everyone should make a point of meeting in the pages of the "Boys' Herald."

YOUR EDITOR.

£10 in Prizes Every Week.

1st Prize, £5.

3 Prizes of Splendid Tuck Hampers. 8 Prizes of 5s. each.

On this page you will find a picture-puzzle, dealing with boating, which you are invited to solve. Bear in mind that each of the pictures may represent part of a word—one, two, or three words. There is nothing unusual about the wording, and the sense of the sentence will guide you. Solutions containing alternatives will be disqualified.

When you have solved the pictures to your satisfaction, write your solution in ink on one side of a clean sheet of paper, then sign the coupon beneath the picture. Cut out the picture and the coupon—do not sever the coupon from the picture—pin your solution to the picture, and post to:

Boy Heroes' Competition No. 21, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4,

so as to reach that address not later than Wednesday, May 18th.

This competition is run in conjunction with the "Boys' Herald," and readers of that journal are invited to compete.

Read These Rules Carefully.

The First Prize of £5 will be awarded to the competitor who complies with the foregoing conditions, and sends a solution exactly the same as the Editor's original paragraph. In the event of no competitor's solution being exactly the same as the original paragraph, the prize will be awarded to the competitor whose solution is the nearest.

The second or other prizes will be awarded to the readers whose solutions are next in order of merit.

In the event of ties, the right to add together and divide any or all of the prizes is reserved, but the full amount will be awarded. No competitor will be awarded more than one share of any prize.

No responsibility can be undertaken for any effort lost, delayed, or mislaid, and proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery or receipt.

The Editor reserves the right to disqualify any competitor's solution for reasons which he considers good and sufficient. The decision of the Editor must be accepted as final and legally binding in all matters concerning the competition, and entries are only accepted on this express condition. Correspondence must not be enclosed with efforts, nor will any be entered into in connection with this competition. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

A large word puzzle grid with various words and phrases like 'river', 'S', 'G', 'W', 'the', 'FW', 'W', 'H', 'SMASH ON RAILWAY', 'BUS OVERTURNS', 'HOUSE COLLAPSES', 'MA', 'EELY', 'HAP', '&', 'care', 'iii', 'N', 'SS', 'ary', '2', 'the', 'is', 'A', 'N', 'sel', 'S', 'W', 'ous', 'TH', '2', 'DO'.

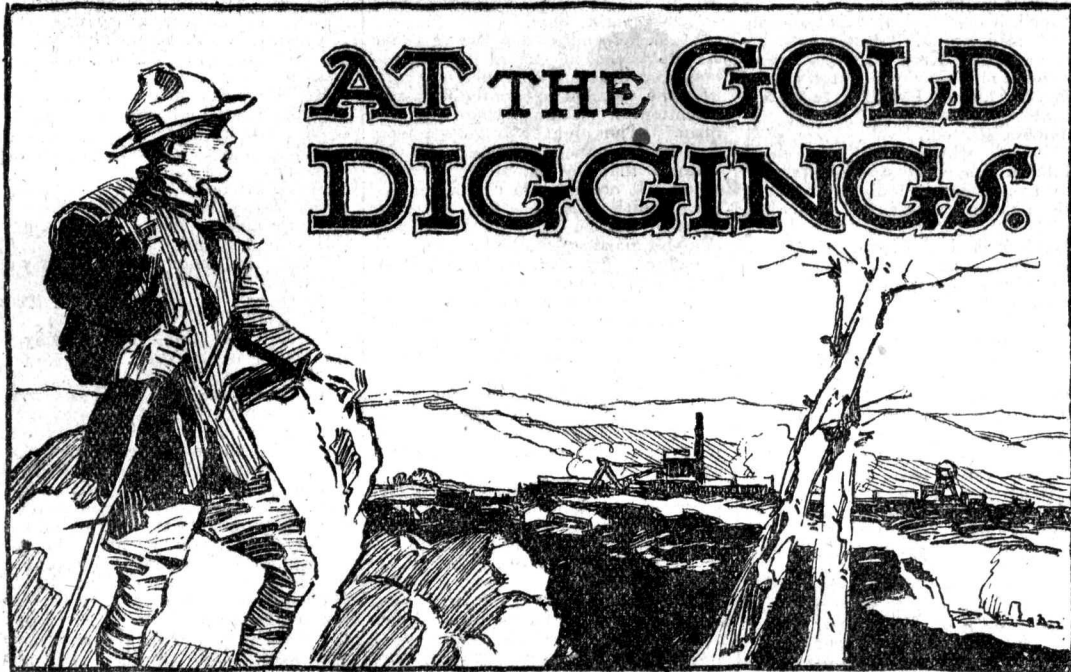
B.F. I enter Boys' Heroes Competition No. 21, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

Address.....

Closing date of Competition—May 18th.

A GRAND LONG COMPLETE YARN OF FRANK RICHARDS. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



The 1st Chapter.
Red Deer Mine!

"Stop him!"

Frank Richards looked up.

It was a glorious May morning in British Columbia. From a cloudless sky, the sun blazed down upon the trail that climbed the steep hillside, by the side of a torrent that leaped and foamed on its way down to the plains. On a boulder beside the leaping stream, Frank had sat down to rest. He had been on the tramp since dawn, and the Red Deer Mine, for which he was heading, was still out of sight up the winding canyon trail.

A rapid patter of feet on the stony path came to his ears, followed by a ringing shout.

Down the steep path towards him, with the activity of an elk, a man came bounding—a man with a copper skin and gleaming black eyes. Twenty yards behind him came a white man, his face flushed crimson with exertion, in hot pursuit.

It was the white man who shouted, as he caught sight of Frank Richards sitting on the boulder beside the trail. "Stop him! Stop thief!"

Frank rose quickly to his feet.

The running Redskin was still some distance from him, and it was easy enough for Frank to stop him. On one side of the trail leaped the torrent, on the other was a steep wall of rock, inaccessible to anyone less sure-footed than a mountain goat.

There was no escape on either side for the fleeing Indian. He paused a second as he caught sight of Frank and then came bounding desperately on!

"Stop him!" roared the pursuer. "Stop thief!"

Frank Richards jumped out into the trail and held up his hand. "Stop!" he shouted.

The Indian did not stop.

His dusky hand fumbled in his deerskin girdle as he ran, and a knife flashed out in the sunlight.

He came right on, the knife gleaming in his hand, and his black eyes glinting at the schoolboy in his path.

Frank Richards stood his ground.

His heart thumped as the Redskin rushed down on him, knife in hand. He had no weapon, excepting the stick he carried in his hand, and which he had cut in the wood below to help him up the steep trail. He grasped the stick and stood steady, his eyes on the Indian.

In a few seconds more the man was upon him.

He came with a rush like a bull, the knife gleaming in the air, probably expecting the schoolboy to leap aside and give him free passage.

But Frank did not retreat. His stick swept through the air and caught the Indian's wrist with a crash, and the knife went spinning into the stream.

The next instant the Redskin crashed into him, and they rolled on the rocky trail together.

Frank Richards was underneath, dazed by the shock. But as the Indian leaped up and ran on, Frank grasped at his ankle, caught it, and dragged him over. The Redskin came down again with a heavy bump and a yell.

Before he could rise a second time the pursuer was upon the scene.

As the Indian scrambled up, a heavy cowhide boot caught him in the ribs and rolled him over. Then

the big boot was planted on his chest, pinning him down. The Redskin lay quiet, his black eyes glinting up at his captor like a cornered snake's.

"I guess this is a cinch," panted the white man. "I reckon I've got you by the short hairs, Kaloota."

The Indian did not speak. Now that he was captured, he seemed to be accepting his fate with the stoical indifference of his race. Frank Richards rose to his feet and stood looking on, a little breathless, and rather curious to know what the trouble was.

"What has he done?" he asked.

The big white man glanced at him and mopped his streaming brow.

"I guess he's given me a run down the hill for nearly a mile," he answered, "and I calculate he would have got away with the stuff if you hadn't chipped in, bub. I guess I was pumped, some. Now, Kaloota, shake it out of your rags!"

The Indian did not stir.

"You hear me? Shake it out!"

No reply from the Indian.

"I guess I'll make you get a move on, Kaloota. You've got a stick there, bub. Lay it across him till I give the word!"

Frank Richards shook his head.

"I want to know what's the matter first," he answered coolly. "I stopped the fellow because you called out 'Stop thief!' But I want to know what he's done!"

"Lend me your stick!"

"Not till I know the rights of the matter," answered Frank.

"I guess I'd take that stick and give you the thick end of it for your sauce, if you hadn't just done me a good turn," snapped the other.

"But if you're so darned curious, the Injun has scooted with a nugget from the Red Deer Mine, and he's got it in his rags now. I guess I'm Red Deer Smith, the manager of the mine. Got that?"

"Oh! You're Mr. Smith?" exclaimed Frank.

"You've heard of me, I guess?"

"I was told down the hill that Mr. Smith was manager at Red Deer," said Frank. "I'm going there looking for work."

Mr. Smith stared at him.

"I guess you ain't beginning well by cheeking the manager," he said. "Now lend me your stick, and not so much chin-music."

Frank Richards handed over the stick. He understood now that Kaloota was one of the "hands" at the gold-mine, and had bolted with a nugget instead of handing it over—as gold-mining hands have sometimes done from the beginning of gold-mining.

Mr. Smith whirled the stick in the air.

"Now, are you shelling out, Kaloota?"

The Indian, with a grunt, groped in his rags, and tossed out a gold nugget on the trail.

"Pick that up, boy!"

Frank Richards obeyed.

"I guess that's the piece," said Mr. Smith. He removed his heavy boot from the Indian's chest. "Now you can git, Kaloota. You needn't come looking for a job again at Red Deer. If I spot you around the diggings, I guess I'll make some marks on your copper hide. Savvy? Now git!"

The Indian rose, watching the mine-manager warily.

Mr. Smith was standing ready to

kick him as he started; and a kick from the big, cowhide boot was not a light matter.

"Are you travelling?" demanded Mr. Smith, as he raised the stick again.

Kaloota, with a snarl, turned and ran. He was quick, but not quick enough to escape the active foot of the mine-manager. The heavy boot crashed on him from behind as he ran, and he lost his footing and rolled down the steep trail, yelling.

Red Deer Smith burst into a roar of laughter.

"I guess that lets you out, Kaloota. Don't let me see you agin—it'll be bad for your health if I do, I guess. Git!"

The Indian scrambled up a dozen yards away and fled. Mr. Smith tossed the stick back to Frank Richards, put the gold nugget in his

the greater part of humanity—to work or starve. To work he was quite willing; but it did not seem so easy for a wandering schoolboy to get a "job" in the Canadian West. The jobs he had already tried had not turned out successful.

He started up the trail after the mine manager, and hurried on to join him. Mr. Smith appeared to have forgotten his existence already; he was a busy man, and his duty at the mine claimed him. But he glanced down at the schoolboy, as Frank came up panting at his side.

"Want anything?" he asked.

Frank felt a little indignant.

"Well, as I've helped you get your nugget back, it wouldn't be out of the way to say 'Thank you,' at least!" he answered.

Mr. Smith nodded.

"Thank you!" he said.

And he strode on.

Frank kept pace with him, breaking into a trot every now and then to keep up with the mine manager's long strides.

"Want anything else?" asked Mr. Smith, after a few minutes, as he found the schoolboy of Cedar Creek still at his side.

"Yes."

"Give it a name."

"Work!" said Frank.

Mr. Smith laughed.

"I guess you've earned a few dollars helping me to get hold of that Injun," he said, "Call it five—what!"

"I don't want any reward for that," answered Frank. "I'm looking for a job at the mines. I was coming up to Red Deer to ask you for a job."

"I guess there ain't a job at the mine for a kid just out of his nurse's arms," replied Mr. Smith. "Take my advice, and go back to school. Come along in ten years' time, and I'll give you a trial."

Frank Richards made no rejoinder to that. Mr. Smith, with his long strides, went on ahead, and soon disappeared up the trail. Frank Richards followed in the same direction, though feeling very discouraged. After Mr. Smith's reply there seemed to be little chance of getting work at Red Deer; but he would not turn back after having come so far.

others attended to the sluice-boxes into which the gold was washed. A hundred yards away stood a group of pinewood buildings—the bunk-houses and cook-house; and a little farther on a lumber-built house with a green-painted veranda, which Frank guessed to be the residence of the manager.

It was to the latter building that Frank would have taken his way, if he had not already encountered Mr. Smith. But it did not seem useful to call on the manager just then.

Mr. Smith had stated, with unnecessary plainness, that he had no job for a schoolboy, and Frank did not want to hear it over again.

In a discouraged frame of mind, he walked on to the group of buildings, scarcely knowing what he should do when he got there. But he was tired and hungry, and Red Deer marked the limit of his travels for that day. He discerned that there was no "camp"—the bunk-houses, cook-house, and store all evidently belonging to the mine, and only the employees of Red Deer Smith lived there.

It was nearly midday, and an appetizing smell came from the cook-house as Frank approached it.

A fat negro, in a state of great perspiration, was cooking there, and he glanced round and waved a ladle as Frank looked in.

"You git!" he said laconically.

And Frank Richards "got."

With a last sizzle, the huge monitor ceased to play, and the men in gumboots came crowding towards the cook-house. Some of them glanced rather curiously at the dusty schoolboy, and one or two of them gave him a rough salutation in passing.

But nobody displayed any interest in him, or cared to ask him who he was or what he was doing there. To purchase a meal in the mine cook-house was out of the question, and Frank Richards did not care to ask for one gratis. He moved on rather aimlessly, wishing fervently that he had never tramped up the long, steep trail to try his luck at Red Deer. He was wondering whether it would be advisable, after all, to look in at the manager's house, and give Mr. Smith another chance of securing his services, when a heavy hand dropped on his shoulder, and he spun round, to



IN THE DEAD OF THE NIGHT! Frank Richards kept well back in the shadows. Would the Indian discover the sleeping form of the miner on the veranda and, if so, what dire vengeance would he wreak upon the unfortunate man?

pocket, and started up the trail with long strides.

The 2nd Chapter.
No Hands Wanted!

Frank Richards looked after the mine-manager.

This was the man he was coming to Red Deer to see; to ask for a job at the diggings.

He did not seem a very promising individual to deal with; but Frank had no choice in the matter. His old home in Thompson Valley was closed to him, and he was looking for work, and it was necessary to find it. During his tramp up from Siskoo, his slender supply of cash had almost run out—and Frank's choice was that of

find himself looking at Red Deer Smith himself.

The burly manager gave him a grin.

"So you've come on hyer?" he said.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Frank.

"What are you looking for hyer?"

"A job."

"I guess I've told you about that. But I reckon you've been on tramp some time, bub?"

"Yes."

"Hungry?"

"Yes."

"Waal, you did me a good turn down yonder," said Mr. Smith. "I guess I can stand you a meal. Come alonger me."

Mr. Smith had long been out of sight when Frank Richards came in sight of the Red Deer mine.

In his earlier days at Cedar Creek Frank had seen something of placer-mining on the creeks of the Thompson River, and he had expected to see something of the same sort at Red Deer. But the Red Deer diggings were quite different.

The "mine" was more like a rugged gash in the hillsides than anything else. A huge monitor, fed by the waters of the creek, splashed a roaring stream of water upon it with terrific force, hurling earth and stones and even rocks into the air. Men in gumboots that reached to the thigh waded in the water, clearing away stones and rubble, while

AT THE GOLD DIGGINGS!

(Continued from previous page.)

Frank Richards hesitated. He was both fatigued and hungry, but he hesitated to accept an invitation delivered in that rough-and-ready fashion. But Red Deer Smith obviously did not understand such delicacies—or perhaps he had no time for them. He stared at Frank.

"Didn't you say you were hungry?"

"Ye-es."

"Then come along. What's the matter with you?"

"Thanks; I'm coming," said Frank.

Mr. Smith strode on without wasting further words, and Frank Richards followed him into the lumber-house. And he was glad enough, a few minutes later, to find himself sitting down to a solid meal, brought along from the cook-house by a smiling, almond-eyed Celestial.

The 3rd Chapter. Kaloota Returns!

Red Deer Smith leaned back in a big wicker-work chair after dinner on the veranda, and lighted a thick black cheroot. Dinner and the cheroot combined to put Mr. Smith into a good humour, and his rugged, bearded face wore quite a good-natured expression. He signed to Frank Richards to join him on the veranda, and Frank sat down there, glad to rest. Wild and rugged as Red Deer was, there were flowers in pots along the veranda, and a green creeper clambering over it. The outlook upon range over range of hills was splendid; but Mr. Smith's glance, when it wandered, came to rest on the monitor by the creek and the ugly gashes of the mine workings. Red Deer Smith evidently had an eye for utility rather than for beauty. But as he progressed through his strong-smelling cheroot, he turned his attention to Frank Richards.

"You're looking for work up here in the mountains—what?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Left school long?"

"Only a few weeks."

"What's your name?"

"Frank Richards."

"Canadian born?"

"No; I'm from the Old Country," answered Frank. "But I know how to work, if you like to give me a chance."

"I guess you wouldn't be any use hyer," said Mr. Smith. "It's man's work at the Red Deer mine, and hard work at that. But you did me a good turn—that nugget was worth fifty dollars that Kaloota stole. You're goin' on tramp again when you leave hyer—legging it, hay?"

"Yes. I shall try my luck at the place-mining," said Frank. "I shall find something to do, anyhow."

"That's plucky!" commented Mr. Smith. "Plenty of work in Canada for any galoot that ain't afraid of it. If you want an easy life in a town, you're liable to join the unemployed; but if you're willing to do chores, there's plenty of chores to be done. I'd take you on as chore-boy hyer, only I'm satisfied with that Chink, and don't want to fire him—"

"I'm not looking for another chap's job," said Frank hastily.

Mr. Smith smiled.

"That's right, too. Well, I reckon you may get a job lower down, in the cattle country, or something on the fruit ranches, now that the summer's coming on. And I reckon I'll stand you ten dollars to see you on your way, after what you did this morning. Got that?"

Frank shook his head.

"Thank you!" he said. "I don't want any money I don't earn. I'm not down to my uppers yet."

Mr. Smith regarded him thoughtfully through the smoke of his cheroot.

"Jest as you like," he said. "Is there anything I can do for you, bub?"

I reckon I'm due at the mine in five minutes now."

Frank hesitated.

"If you'd like to let me hang on to-day, and sleep in one of the sheds to-night, I'll be obliged," he said.

"I'm jolly well tired out with tramping, and I'd like to leave it till sunrise to-morrow before I take the trail again."

"I guess you can bunk in the shed next the stables, if you like," said Mr. Smith. "You'll find plenty of clean straw there. You won't walk off with my moss in the middle of the night, a hope!"

Frank started to his feet, flushing scarlet.

"If you think I may be a thief—"

he began hotly.

"Shush!" said Mr. Smith, chuckling. "My little joke, that's all. I guess I know a galoot's face when he's honest. Hang on hyer, bub, and turn up to supper at seven, and sleep in the shed arter. And if you alter your mind about them ten dollars, let me know before you vamoose. So-long!"

Mr. Smith threw away the stump of his cheroot, tramped down the veranda steps, and strode away towards the mine. In a few minutes more the monitor was hissing and roaring, and the gum-booted miners were busy, Red Deer Smith directing operations. And Frank, who had nothing to do, and was tired, sought out the shed, and went to sleep in the straw, glad, at any rate, of a good rest before he should take up the trail again on the morrow.

Through the hot afternoon Frank Richards slept soundly enough, undisturbed by the din from the gold-mine. In his dreams he saw again his old home at the ranch in the Thompson Valley, and saw himself riding to the backwoods school with Bob Lawless and Beauclerc. Chunky Todgers, and Yen Chin, the Chinese, and Miss Meadows mingled in his dreams—and somehow, along with them, the dark, evil face of Kaloota, the Indian he had stopped on the Red Deer trail that morning. Dark and threatening was the evil copper face, and the knife of the Indian gleamed, and Frank Richards awoke suddenly, startled out of slumber by the vividness of the vision. He sat up in the straw, and stared around him, still half-asleep, and in expectation of seeing the Redskin. But the next moment he smiled at his nervous fears. Through the open shed door came the golden flood of sunlight from the western sky, and the sound of voices from the men in gum-boots working at the mine.

Frank Richards rolled out of the straw, and stood in the doorway, looking out. Westward, range on range of hills glowed in the sinking sun, and lakes and torrents flashed back crimson and gold. It was close on sundown, and Frank began to think of the supper Red Deer Smith had mentioned. The keen mountain air made him hungry.

He turned back to the lumber-built house with the green veranda, from the windows of which the lamps were glimmering now.

He passed the shed, which was to be his sleeping-quarters that night, and, finding the door left open, stepped to it to close it. As he was to sleep there, he did not want to find one of the wandering Indian dogs ensconced in the straw when he turned in. Some slight sound caught his ear, and he looked round the dusky shed, with a feeling of uneasiness. Somehow the dark, evil face of Kaloota, which had haunted his dreams, came before his mind's eye.

He could see nothing in the gloom of the shed, and he struck a match and held it up, looking about him sharply.

The shed seemed vacant, but he noticed that the straw where he had slept was humped up, and with a quick suspicion in his mind, he strode towards it. The match went out, and he struck another, and stirred the heap of straw with his boot.

There was a sharp exclamation from under the straw.

"I thought so!" said Frank grimly.

"Turn out, you rascal, whoever you are! What are you skulking there for?"

The straw was thrown aside, and a dark, Indian face looked out in the gloom. Frank started back towards the open doorway as he recognised Kaloota. He had not forgotten the Indian's knife.

The Redskin eyed him evilly.

His knife had gone into the mountain stream at his encounter with Frank on the trail; but he had evidently obtained another weapon, for Frank saw the haft peeping out of his deerskin belt.

He did not touch the weapon, however.

He stood silent in the straw, eyeing the schoolboy framed against the last glimmer of the sun in the doorway.

"So it's you!" said Frank.

No answer, but the Indian's black eyes glittered.

"What are you doing here?" demanded Frank, watching the man warily, quite prepared for an angry rush.

"Kaloota come here sleep!" said the Indian.

"Is that all?"

Kaloota nodded.

"Well, if that's all, there's no harm done," said Frank. "But you're an ugly customer, Kaloota, and I fancy you mean mischief; you're too handy with your knife. I shall have to tell Mr. Smith you are here."

Kaloota started.

"No tell white chief!" he said.

"Kaloota come sleep—Kaloota far away from Redskin lodges. No hurt little paleface. But no tell big chief!"

Frank looked at him distrustfully. If the Indian had crept back to the mine only for a night's shelter, there was no harm done; but it seemed to Frank that he read more than that in the glittering, revengeful eyes. Before he could decide what to answer, however, the powerful voice of Red Deer Smith was heard.

"Richards! You around, boy?"

"Here I am!" called back Frank.

"I guess you won't get any supper if you don't look lively!" Red Deer Smith came striding up.

"What's the game hyer? Hallo! Kaloota, by the jumping Jehoshaphat!"

The mine manager strode into the shed.

Kaloota laid his hand on his knife, but he had no time to draw it. The brawny hands of Red Deer Smith closed on him, and he was fairly whirled out of the shed into the open.

A powerful kick sent him staggering, and he took to his heels, and vanished into the shadows.

"I guess that's the way to deal with that trash!" said Red Deer Smith, as the Indian disappeared.

"Did you find him here, Richards?"

"Yes; he said he had come for a night's shelter," said Frank. "If that was all he wanted, it seems rather hard—"

Red Deer Smith burst into a laugh.

"I guess that Injun is pizen," he answered. "He could get a night's shelter down in the valley along with his own folk, if he liked. I reckon he was hyer nosing round for something to steal—another nugget, I guess. He was fooling you, I calculate. Now come in to supper."

And Frank, dismissing the Redskin from his mind, followed the mine manager in to supper.

The 4th Chapter. The Peril of the Night!

Frank Richards made a good supper with the mine manager, and then sat in the veranda with him, while Red Deer Smith smoked his cheroot. Glittering stars spangled in the dark blue heavens, and in the soft starlight the mountain ridges and summits loomed up ghostly in the distance. From the store came the sound of a tuneless chorus roared by the miners, making merry after their day's labour. Then, at the door of the cook-house, the black cook set a phonograph going, and the canyon echoed to the refrains of the "Swanee River" and "The Maple Leaf."

In the manager's house the Chinese chore-boy cleaned up for the night, and disappeared to one of the bunk-houses. Mr. Smith smoked his cheroot, and yawned, and smoked another, and read a week-old paper by lamplight, while Frank found entertainment enough in watching the mine camp, and listening to the phonograph, and looking at the starlight on the hills. When Mr. Smith had finished his paper he proposed a game of draughts, whether to amuse himself or to entertain his visitor Frank did not know. However, they played draughts until nine o'clock, when Red Deer Smith rose and stretched himself, with a portentous yawn.

"I guess this hyer is the time when I turn into my little bunk," he remarked. "You'd better do the same, bub."

"Right-ho!" said Frank.

"I guess I'd offer you a bunk if there was a spare one in the house," said the manager; "but this hyer shebang was fitted up for one."

"It's all right in the shed," answered Frank. "I'm jolly glad not to be sleeping in a thicket by the trail."

"Good enough! Breakfast at six," said Mr. Smith. "And if you want that ten dollars, remind me at breakfast. I sha'n't see you afterwards."

Frank Richards smiled slightly. This was a broad hint that his host expected him to make himself scarce after breakfast the following morning.

Mr. Smith's hospitality was based upon the service Frank had rendered him, and he regarded a day's feed and a night's lodging as sufficient recompense. But Frank was quite prepared to take the trail at dawn. He did not want to linger at Red Deer, where there was nothing

for him to do but to watch others at work.

"I sha'n't want the ten dollars, Mr. Smith," he answered. "Good-night!"

"Good-night, bub!"

Frank descended from the veranda. As he went he heard the mine-manager dragging his blankets out into the veranda, evidently with the intention of sleeping there in the open. The night was very warm, and it was much pleasanter in the veranda than in the stuffy wooden house. It occurred to Frank that as Mr. Smith was sleeping in the veranda the bunk would be empty, and the manager might have offered it to him. But apparently Red Deer Smith's hospitality had its limits. Frank rather preferred the shed, however, with the bed of straw and the starlight glimmering in upon him.

It was useless to think of sleep yet awhile, and, in any case, Frank was feeling too disquieted to sleep. He could not help picturing the slinking figure of the Indian, creeping in the shadows of the manager's house, his evil eyes glinting, his knife at hand, and Red Deer Smith at his mercy if he dared to take his revenge.

Frank opened the shed door, and looked out into the night.

It was nearly eleven o'clock now, and all was still and silent, save for a snarl occasionally from the dogs worrying over the bones thrown away outside the cookhouse. The scene was so peaceful that Frank's disturbed nerves were soon calmed. But he continued to look from the doorway, thinking of many things in the silence of the night.

He started suddenly.

From where he stood he could see the wooden posts, painted green, and the steps of the veranda of the manager's house. The starlight that glimmered there was broken by a black passing shadow.

Frank rubbed his eyes, and looked again.

A dark figure was creeping up the veranda steps, not a dozen paces from him.

His heart beat fast.

He could not recognise the man, but he had no doubt as to his identity. Kaloota had returned—for revenge.

As the figure moved, Frank caught a glimmer of gold steel in the starlight. The Indian's knife was in his hand.

"Good heavens!" muttered Frank.

Without even stopping to catch up his stick, he ran at top-speed towards the veranda steps.

He reached them almost in the twinkling of an eye.

The dark figure had disappeared into the veranda above. And from above came the sound of a deep, unmusical snore, showing that Red Deer Smith, rolled in his blankets, was sleeping soundly.

Like a flash Frank Richards dashed up the veranda steps.

He heard a hissing breath in the gloom.

The dark figure had reached the sleeping manager, and Red Deer Smith's eyes, closed in deep sleep, saw nothing of the danger. But the Indian turned his head at Frank's footsteps, and that pause alone saved the life of the sleeping man.

Kaloota's black eyes dilated and glittered at the sight of Frank Richards. The schoolboy of Cedar Creek rushed straight at him, heedless of the knife.

Before the startled Redskin could act, Frank was upon him, and grasping him.

The Redskin closed with him savagely like a wildcat, and Frank felt the knife graze along his cheek. An instinctive movement saved him from the slash. The next second he had hold of the ruffian's wrist, and was holding off the knife. They trampled heavily as they struggled, and Red Deer Smith, suddenly awakened, leaped to his feet with an oath.

"By hokey!"

"Help!" panted Frank Richards.

In the grasp of the Indian he went down, and Kaloota's knee was planted on his chest. The Redskin dragged his right hand free, and the knife flashed in the starlight as it swept aloft. And Frank Richards, with a shudder of horror, closed his eyes as the savage blow descended.

The 5th Chapter. An Offer Declined!

Frank Richards' life hung on a thread.

But the keen steel that circled above him, and came sweeping down in a savage, murderous blow, never reached him.

Red Deer Smith's fist, clenched and like a lump of iron, crashed on the side of Kaloota's head even as he struck, and the Indian, half-stunned by the blow, reeled aside.

The knife came down, but it drove into the wooden planks of the veranda, two or three inches from

Frank's shoulder. It stuck there, quivering, and the Indian lost his grasp on it as he rolled over.

He had no chance to rise again.

Red Deer Smith's grasp was upon him, and in the powerful hands of the mine-manager, Kaloota was helpless.

Red Deer Smith held him, shaking him like a rat, the Redskin struggling feebly, and in vain.

"That you, Richards?" panted the manager.

Frank sat up dazedly.

His escape from death had been so fearfully narrow that it had left him shaken and white.

"Yes," he stammered; "have you got him?"

"I guess I've got the skunk. Are you hurt?"

"N-no, I—I think not. Only a scratch!" gasped Frank.

"That's good!"

Two or three of the miners were coming out of the bunk-houses now, and the manager shouted to them. Kaloota, still resisting feebly, was handed over to them, Red Deer Smith going with them to see that the Indian was safely "roped" up till the morning. What was to happen to him then Frank Richards did not know, but he had no doubt that it was to be something drastic.

Frank sat in the veranda to wait for Mr. Smith's return. He was feeling almost sick with the horror of what he had been through. It was a quarter of an hour before Mr. Smith returned.

"I guess that scallywag is safe till morning," he remarked grimly. "If he gets out of the rope I've put round him he will be a wonder. Sure you're not hurt, Richards?"

"Only this scratch on my cheek," said Frank. "The knife went pretty close."

"You've been plucky. Tain't every galoot that would have tackled an Injun with a knife, with his bare hands," said Mr. Smith. "I reckon it was lucky for me I gave you a night's lodging, Richards. I s'pose you woke up and saw the durned scallywag nosing around?"

"I wasn't asleep," said Frank. "I'd been thinking of him, too. I thought he'd come back for mischief."

"I reckon I'll take all the mischief outer him to-morrow," said Red Deer Smith grimly. "Now you get back to bed, Richards. But I guess I want to talk to you in the morning. Breakfast at six, remember!"

"Right-ho, Mr. Smith!"

Frank Richards did not find it easy to sleep. It was a couple of hours before he was able to keep his eyes closed. But he slept at last, and did not waken again until the raucous notes of a "buzzer" rang through the canyon, calling the Red Deer community to a new day and its labour.

Frank came out of the shed and took a dip in the creek, and turned up at the manager's house in time for breakfast at six. He found Red Deer Smith already at breakfast when he came in.

"Pile in!" said the manager laconically.

Frank Richards piled in with a good appetite. Red Deer Smith did not speak again till breakfast was over. Then he rose and lighted his pipe, and fixed his eyes on the school-boy of Cedar Creek.

"You saved my life last night!" he said abruptly.

"I suppose I did," assented Frank.

"It was plucky," said Red Deer Smith. "You had a narrow shave, a closer call I never want to see."

"I know."

"You came here looking for a job," continued the mine-manager. "I told you straight there wasn't a job going for a kid like you."

"That's so!"

"But I reckon this alters the case," said Red Deer Smith. "I'm going to give you a job."

Frank Richards brightened.

"I'd be glad of it," he said.

"What can I do?"

"Nothing, I reckon. I'm going to make a job for you, and put you on the pay-roll," said Mr. Smith.

"Savvy? I dare say you'll make yourself useful one way or another in the long run. Catch on?"

Frank rose to his feet.

"Thanks!" he said. "That's not the job I want. I'm not out looking for the bread of idleness, Mr. Smith. Thank you for a night's lodging, and good-bye!"

And Frank tramped away in the fresh morning sunshine, with his back to Red Deer, and the world before him once more.

THE END.

(There is a long complete Frank Richards yarn every week in the BOYS' FRIEND. \$100 Reward! is the title of next Monday's. Order your copy NOW!)

A STORY OF THE RICHEST SCHOOLBOY IN THE WORLD!



THE SCHOOLBOY MULTI-MILLIONAIRE!

BY VICTOR NELSON.

Inez Alvarez stood before him, and her dark eyes glittered menacingly though the holes in her mask into his.

"General," she said, in her low, musical tones, "you will realise that you are entirely at our mercy; but our one wish is to relieve you of the collection of precious stones you have rather unwisely hoarded here. If you will be sensible, and tell us in what part of the house they are concealed, no harm whatsoever will befall you. On the other hand, a refusal on your part to fall in with our wishes will be punished by death in a very unpleasant form! What is your decision? Nod your head if you agree to disclose the whereabouts of the jewels."

General Pepper was not easily intimidated, and, far from nodding his head, he vigorously shook it, and glared his defiance.

The woman shrugged her shoulders. "So be it!" she said. "You are bringing upon yourself what is going to happen!"

She made a quick sign to one of her confederates, who stood upon the table a small leathern attache case, which none of the captives had previously noticed.

Simultaneously, one of the other masked men forced up one of the veteran's hands, after partially freeing it, and knotted one end of a length of cord about the wrist.

He then tugged upon it until the old soldier's hand and arm rested upon the table, and to ensure that they remained thus, he firmly secured his end of the cord to one of the opposite legs.

Chuta, the boys, and the admiral watched in puzzlement, as the masked intruder who had charge of the attache case carefully measured with a pocket-rule from the old soldier's clenched fingers to a point he marked with a drawing-pin at the table's farther side.

He swiftly jerked the marking-pin from the mahogany, and in its place drove in a screw. Moving the attache case near the latter he slipped over it a loop of a leash-like strip of hide, which protruded from under the lid of the case.

The vigilance of the members of the gang who were covering the group of prisoners by the wall increased, and, with a gesture that was intentionally dramatic, the man by the table opened the attache case, and whipped it away, leaving a squirming brown-and-yellow-speckled object on the table.

Involuntarily gasps of horror broke from the white-faced boys and the admiral, whilst, although he remained silent, the sombre eyes of Chuta widened with dismay.

For, held captive by the strip of hide, which was secured to its tail, was a small, vicious-looking snake, and it was twisting and writhing to break free, and, in doing so, lashing itself into a state of fury.

The general gave a startled jump, and recoiled as far as he was able in his chair. But, he was unable to remove his arm and hand from the table, and his eyes were dilating in horror; for, when the snake stretched itself at full length, its diamond-shaped head was within an inch of the old man's clenched fingers.

"An Indian swamp adder—one of the most deadly reptiles of its kind, general!" Inez Alvarez said mockingly.

And as another of her men came forward, unscrewing the stopper of a flask he held, both Don Darrel and Chuta knew what was to come.

Well might the woman lead a band of criminals. She was as cruel and un-

scrupulous as she was beautiful. Only a brain absolutely fiendish could have devised such a means to enforce the general to disclose his secret.

Don Darrel had been laid upon a couch, and he watched the grim scene by the table with horrified and fascinated eyes. Inez Alvarez and her gang were about to submit their victim to a somewhat changed form of what the American Indians had known when years ago they had been waging their endless war against the white men, as the "snake torture."

"You will notice, general," the woman drawled, "that the strip of hide is just too short to allow of our pet reaching your hand with its poison fangs. In the flask my comrade here is holding is water. Do you know what happens to hide when sprinkled with water? It stretches, general—becomes slack. Are you still foolish enough to refuse to tell us what we want to know?"

The old man's eyes almost bolted from his head, and his face now was as white as the proverbial sheet.

In the ordinary way he was no coward. A glance at his record when he had actively served his country was ample proof of that, but death in the form that threatened—swift, almost instant, death that came without his being able to stir an inch to save himself, appalled him.

He shuddered, his gaze fixed in a semi-hypnotised stare on the repulsive reptile that writhed and twisted, and

hand, and, to his fevered imagination, it seemed that its head was already nearer his convulsively-clenched fingers.

More water upon the hide, and the woman flicked at the snake with her handkerchief, goading it into vicious rage, which it endeavoured to turn upon the helpless man before it.

Don Darrel wrenched and strained at his bonds. The Boy with Fifty Millions would have risked all in an attempt to snatch away the snake and grind his heel upon its ugly head could he have broken free. But his captors had not bungled their work, and the more he tore at the cords about his wrists the tighter they became.

Admiral Biffen was breathing hard as he was compelled to watch the terrible mental torment of his neighbour and one-time enemy, whilst Grierson, Losely, Philips, and South were quivering like high-spirited hounds kept in check by leashes. All that was British in them was outraged by the cowardly and dastardly thing they were witnessing, and only the revolvers of the men who guarded them kept them from leaping to the old soldier's aid.

Chuta could stand it no longer, and suddenly he made a quick spring towards the table, one of his red-brown hands darting behind him to snatch from his belt his tomahawk. But instantly three of the crooks flung themselves upon him, the weapon was taken from him, and he was forced back, with the muzzles of a brace of automatics pressed menacingly to his chest.

"Say, quit on it!" Don Darrel said hoarsely. "I'll give you five—ten thousand pounds to put that snake back in the case!"

Inez Alvarez smiled a cruel, little smile as she shook her head.

"We shall demand far more than that from you, Master Darrel," she sneered, "if you, too, do not want to die!"

"You fiend!" Don breathed, his handsome, boyish face curiously stern.

beautiful queen of the desperadoes hissed, pointing to the speckled agent of destruction. "Do you not see that in a few moments more the snake will reach you? Are you more in love with your jewels than your life?"

The general's face was ashen now, and his eyes dazed with dread. His ordeal, however, was almost over.

Suddenly his nerve gave way, and he did a thing he had never before been guilty of in his life. He pitched sideways in his chair in a dead faint.

An exclamation of chagrin broke from Inez Alvarez, and she signed for the snake to be put back in the attache case.

A member of the gang took the tongs from the fender, and, gripping the reptile's sinuous body between them, dropped it back in the case, and quickly jerked shut the lid and fastened it.

He had hardly taken the loop of the hide from the screw driven into the table than a startled gasp came from another of the villains who was standing by the French windows.

"My heavens, what's that?" he cried, in mingled alarm and excitement.

Instantly a tense silence fell upon those who crowded the room. The admiral, Chuta, and the boys, as well as Inez Alvarez and her followers, gazed towards the garden, their ears strained and a question in their eyes.

From the direction of the river floated a steady beat of a motor, and a thrill of hope shot through Don Darrel, as he understood what it meant.

Someone was in his launch, and had started the engine. Did it mean that someone had seen the raiders, and was seeking to rush away downstream and bring help?

"The launch! The launch we saw moored to the river-bank!" Inez Alvarez cried. "Quick! Six of you stay here to guard our prisoners. The others come with me. Someone is trying to get away and give the alarm, and bring the police down upon us!"

She went running through the

A Terrible Torture!

Don Darrel, a lad of fifteen, inherited the stupendous sum of fifty millions from a stranger whose life he saved out on his ranch in Mexico. He came to England to school, with his dog, Snap, and his half-caste servant, Chuta. He, with his three special chums—Frank Philips, South, and Losely—are the leaders of the junior portion of Eaglehurst School.

There is a gang of crooks who are out "to get" Don. The Boy with Fifty Millions bought a motor-launch, and while out picnicing with his chums they met a General Pepper.

The general invited them to stay with him for the night. There was a perpetual state of "war" between the general and his neighbour, Admiral Biffen, over a large oak in the latter's garden. At dead of night the boys and General Pepper invaded the admiral's garden and cut the tree down. They were interrupted by the arrival of the gang of crooks, who forced them at the revolver's point into the general's house. Admiral Biffen's daughter, Elsie, had, however, seen the progress of events, and determined to reach the police by means of Don's motor-launch.

Meanwhile, very sinister happenings were taking place in the house.

General Pepper had been suddenly set upon by three of the raiders, and, before he could raise a single cry, he had been gagged. Then, whilst the rest of the scoundrels kept their other prisoners at bay with their weapons, the old soldier was bound in a chair standing before the table.



THE ROYAL FAVOURITE

(HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES. "Sunday Pictorial" of 3rd April states:—"I discovered that the Prince has caught the fashion of chewing gum. He chewed on the grand stand, chewed as he mounted, and was still chewing when he won!")

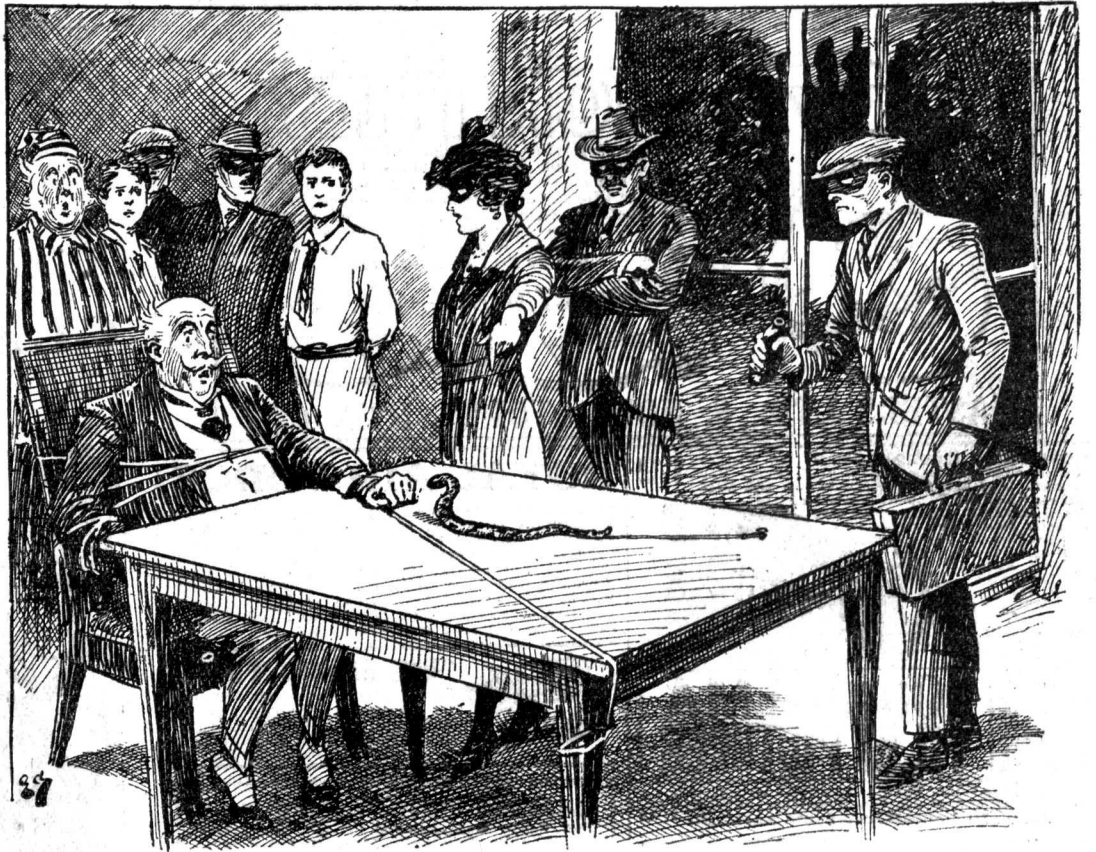
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A TERRIBLE ORDEAL!

"Speak!" hissed the girl. "Speak—tell us where you have hidden your jewels or—" She broke off meaningly. The snake was now within half an inch of the general's hand.

darted forward its hideous flat head in efforts to reach and strike at his hand. It was awful—too terrible to contemplate, and already his nerves were tried to breaking-point.

"Will you speak, general? Nod, if you will," Inez Alvarez said, her eyes fixed mockingly upon his face.

The general made no movement. The thought of losing his treasured jewels steeled his natural dogged bravery, and he glared at the head of the gang defiantly. She shrugged her shoulders in impatience, and made a motion of her hand towards the flask held by her accomplice.

He moved nearer the table, and allowed a few drops of the water to trickle upon the strip of hide. Beads of perspiration broke out upon the brow of General Pepper, as the snake darted yet again at his imprisoned

"If I spend the whole of my wealth, you shall be made to pay for this night's work!"

"Silence, you little whelp!" one of the men ordered, striking him a back-handed blow in the face. "Mind your own business, and think of yourself! You are in our power, and will need to do so before we have done with you!"

Again the scoundrel with the flask allowed water to drip upon the hide that held the angry and venomous reptile in check, and now there was not the slightest doubt that the water was having effect.

The strip of skin was slackening—slackening so that the snake's deadly head was reaching within half an inch of the old soldier's knuckles.

"Speak, you stubborn fool!" the

French windows, her nickel-plated revolver in her hand. Half a dozen of her men raced after her, almost tumbling over one another in their haste.

Whilst those left behind closely covered the admiral, the boys, and Chuta with their weapons, Inez Alvarez and the confederates who had accompanied her tore down the sloping garden, and the woman fired at the dim figure she glimpsed in Don Darrel's launch as she neared the water's edge.

It belonged to Elsie, the admiral's daughter, as the reader has doubtless guessed.

The plucky girl had stolen out of the house, and, gaining the launch, started up the engine. She was just in the act of casting off from

THE SCHOOLBOY MULTI-MILLIONAIRE!

(Continued from previous page.)

its moorings when the beautiful Spaniard and her masked followers came racing down the garden towards her.

Many girls would have fainted in terror, but Elsie Biffen had in her much of the stubborn pluck that had won her father his one-time high position in the Navy, and the approach of the scoundrels and their unscrupulous leader only made her hasten in the unhitching of the last rope holding the launch to the bank.

As she cast it free and sprang to the starting-lever, the launch leapt away like a thing of life. A perfect fusillade of revolver-bullets whistled over the girl's head, but fortunately none struck her, and in less time than it takes to write, the launch was many yards away down-stream, and rapidly tearing out of range.

For a short distance the woman and her six followers ran along the bank, firing after the fast-disappearing motor-raft.

A bullet ripped through the sleeve of the coat Elsie had flung on over her dress, and another passed so near to one of her delicate ears that she felt it singe her flesh.

But she clung tenaciously to the driving-wheel, and in another couple of seconds had swept round a bend in the river-bank and was out of sight.

Inez Alvarez pulled up, her beautiful face working with rage.

"Back to the house!" she ordered sharply. "We dare not stay to force the general to speak when he recovers, and must content ourselves with what we can get out of Don Darrel."

"But what will you do with him?" one of her companions asked, as they hurriedly retraced their steps.

"Offer him the choice of two alternatives—the payment of a million pounds sterling, or death!" the woman answered, with a readiness that showed she had already been making plans with regard to the

schoolboy multi-millionaire. "He will pay right enough."

"And our vengeance upon him for bounding us from our retreat at the schoolhouse?" another man asked. "You'll abandon that when we get the money?"

The woman laughed softly, and shook her head.

"Why, no, amigo mio!" she returned. "After we have his million he shall die just the same. When you know me better you will realise that I do not forgive easily. But hasten! We must get the boy away and be far from here without delay, or we may find the district surrounded by police."

They re-entered the room, and Inez Alvarez curtly told her other followers to be ready to leave.

"You, Burke, and you, Jem, take

the boy out to the cars," she ordered.

And, whilst the others kept their weapons pointing at the admiral and the other lads and Chuta, who were still standing over against the wall, the two men addressed went to Don Darrel, picked him up between them, and moved towards the French windows.

As Chuta realised that they were about to carry off his young master, all reason left him, and his black eyes blazed with rage.

For a moment he stood swaying, his hands clenched and his head thrust forward. Then he made a desperate spring towards Don Darrel.

Two shots rang out, the second following so quickly upon the first that they might easily have been mistaken for one.

Chuta halted dead in his leap, flung up his arms, and fell prone upon his face, where he lay still and inert, and from the admiral there came a cry of mingled horror and indignation.

"You murderers! You have killed him!" he cried.

And to Don Darrel, who had seen what had happened, as he had been carried into the garden, it was as if an icy hand had clutched at his heart.

Was the admiral right? Had he

lost in that tense, brief moment his best and truest friend?

The Gang's Escape!

Don Darrel was hurried down the sloping garden by the two men who carried him, and Inez Alvarez, the beautiful but totally unscrupulous woman who led the gang, followed.

Another of the masked desperadoes snatched up the attache-case, containing the deadly snake that had been used in the futile attempt to force General Pepper to disclose the whereabouts of his jewels, then one by one the remainder backed through the French windows.

Once outside, the majority swung round, and hurried after Don's bearers and the woman.

There was no time to waste. Once Elsie Biffen reached some town or village on the riverside, and told her story, the telephone and telegraph wires would hum with the news of the outrages they had committed, and bodies of police would rush to the spot from all directions.

Unless they were quick, they thus might find a cordon flung about them, and discover that escape was cut off in each and every direction.

Back in the room where such grim scenes had occurred, all was confusion.

As soon as the last of the masked

men had retreated through the windows, the admiral had rushed to another room in which there was a telephone.

At one time, before their heated and lengthy quarrel over the admiral's pet tree, he and the general had been constant companions and friends, and Admiral Biffen knew the interior of the old soldier's house almost as well as he knew his own.

But, as he snatched up the receiver, clapped it to his ear, and waited, fuming with impatience, the admiral discovered, as had his daughter, that no answer came from the Exchange, and after desperately trying to attract attention, he was forced to come to the same conclusion as Elsie, that the wires had been severed by the raiders.

As he stood by the instrument, vainly trying to communicate with the Exchange, and thence with the police, Admiral Biffen heard three shots ring out from the garden, and guessed that some of the boys had pluckily followed the escaping crooks.

In this he was right, and he was relieved to find all four lads back in the room and unharmed when he returned to it.

"What happened? What was the firing?" he asked, suppressing a shiver, for it will be remembered that he was clad only in a suit of pyjamas, and he was growing so cold that his teeth were beginning to chatter.

"We went to the windows to see which way the villain went, sir," South replied. "They shot at us as soon as we showed ourselves, and we had to come back. As it was, it was only by luck that we weren't hit. The bullets came whistling right amongst us!"

"The dogs! The murderous villains!" Admiral Biffen snorted. "And this poor fellow, is he dead?"

He indicated Chuta, who still lay prone and motionless on the floor.

"I think he is, sir," South answered, with a shiver, and there was a lump in his throat. "No, though. My hat, he isn't!" he cried next instant. "See, he is moving!"

(Another long instalment of this gripping tale in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)

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