

G. L. JESSOP'S MAGNIFICENT SPORTING STORY IN THIS ISSUE!

The BOYS' FRIEND 1^{1d}/₂

TWELVE PAGES!

TWENTY-SEVENTH YEAR!

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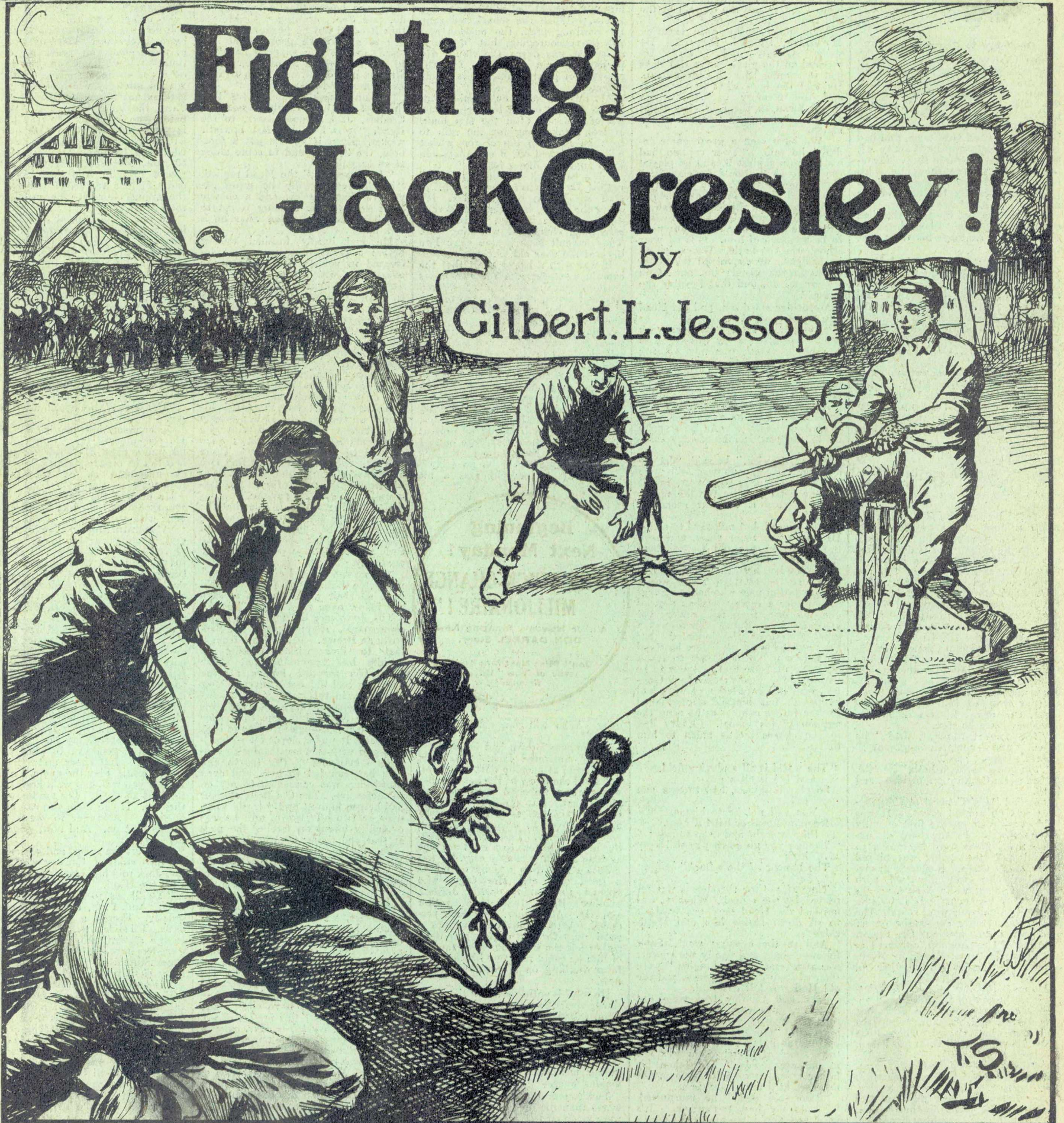
THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending July 9th, 1921.

Fighting Jack Cresley!

by

Gilbert L. Jessop.



THE SCHOOL CAPTAIN'S GREAT CATCH!

Scarcely had the spontaneous outburst of applause commenced at Mordridge's fine hit when Jack Cresley was seen to hurl himself forward, and then, with knees and elbows touching the ground, the ball came to rest in his capacious hands.

THE GREATEST SPORTS YARN OF THE YEAR!



Fighting Jack Cresley!

by
Gilbert L. Jessop

Good-bye to Cressingham!

Jack Cresley, captain of Cressingham, was playing his last match for the old school. It was the final fixture of the summer term, against the Old Boys, captained by the famous Mordridge, the Oxford "blue." Jack Cresley himself was bound for Oxford next term, and had hopes of getting into the Varsity XI himself in the fulness of time. Meantime, he was playing the game of his life, and at the end of the first day's play was distinctly the hero of the match.

He had "stopped the rot" that had set in amongst the school batsmen, and scored a century—his third that term.

Escaping from the crowd of hero-worshippers, Jack made his way to his study, where a letter from his father awaited him. He read it, and turned white. In a moment the head had changed for him. The Barrengarry Mine, of which his father was a director, had stopped working, and involved Mr. Cresley in heavy loss.

Cantley, Jack's staunch chum, came light-heartedly into the study.

"Jack," he exclaimed, "Mordridge says that when you go up to Oxford—"

Jack looked his chum straight in the eyes.

"Cantley, old chap," he said, "I'm not going to Oxford!"

Cantley dropped his hand from Jack's shoulder. He opened his mouth to speak, but Jack stopped him.

"Ted," he said, "I don't want to make a noise about anything. I don't mind you knowing; it'll help me your knowing. But I don't want a noise. Gav'nor's had a bad business fader, and, well—well, I'm not going to Oxford. That's all, Ted."

Cantley's blue eyes looked troubled. He had somehow caught hold of Jack's hand, and he crushed it hard. Then he walked over to the window. Jack came and stood beside him.

Just at that moment little Riley entered, and both of them felt mighty thankful. The fag deposited a bag of buns on the table, and went out. Jack walked over to the tea-things; Cantley dropped into the big arm-chair, and drank his tea in silence. Then suddenly he rose.

"The concert to-night, Jack," he asked, "and the match to-morrow?"

Jack's jaw set hard.

"I'm going through both," he said.

And again Cantley gripped his hand hard.

The Old Boys' Concert at Cressingham was an annual event. It was held every year on the first evening of the match. In the long dining-room the juniors were beginning to collect, and the game was played again many times. Eustace's phenomenal display was discussed with much laughter, while Jack Cresley's name was on everybody's tongue. Suddenly a murmur went round. The Head was coming across the quad; and just at that moment Dr. Edgar, Warden of Cressingham, appeared at the door. He was followed by Mordridge, and one or two of the other Old Boys.

He made his way to the raised platform at the end of the hall, amid enthusiastic cheers. He had just reached his seat, and the commotion had somewhat abated, when little Riley Dawson's shrill voice was heard.

"Here he comes!"

At that moment Jack Cresley, arm-in-arm with Ted Cantley, appeared in the doorway. The din was terrific. Cheer followed cheer, and the Old Boys rose and joined in the ovation.

Then suddenly something happened, which is still handed down among the legends of Cressingham. The Head stood up and cheered the school captain.

Jack's face whitened, but he felt Cantley's strong grip on his arm, and Ted's comforting "Steady up, old boy!" restored his confidence. He

made his way to his seat and sat down. Then when the hubbub had ceased the Head rose to his feet.

"Boys," said Dr. Edgar, "according to the ancient custom of Cressingham, I am to ask the captain of the Old Boys' Team to address you."

Amid more enthusiastic cheering Mordridge stepped forward. He spoke strongly and firmly. He touched on the pleasure the Old Boys had in coming back to Cressingham. He told the boys what Cressingham and the memory of Cressingham would mean to them in after days, and then he went on to speak of the match.

"We have seen a great game to-day," he said. "Your captain had his back up against it, and he played the game as it should be played. I don't know what Cresley will be in this world but of this I am certain, that if he plays the larger game of life as he played the game to-day, Cressingham will never have any need to be ashamed of him. It is all your school asks you to do. We cannot all be brilliant, we cannot all take high places in the world; but one thing we can all do, and that is—play the game!"

Mordridge sat down, and the Head again rose to his feet.

"Boys," he said, "Cresley, your captain, is going away this term, so I'm going to ask him now to sing the old Cressingham song—the song that has been sung here since Cressingham was a school." And he turned to Jack.

Again Jack felt Cantley's big arm squeeze his, and he arose and went towards the piano. As he stepped on to the platform Mordridge came forward.

"I say, Cresley," he said, "let me play your accompaniment, will you? I'm no great dab, you know, but it will be good practice for the nights when I play it in your rooms at Oxford."

Jack winced, but managed to smile. He had a fine tenor voice, and soon the words of the old Cressingham song were ringing through the hall. That song had been sung in the queer places of the earth. There was a little crowd of men who had sung that song under a raging African sky, as one by one they fell under the assegais of the Zulus. There was a great statesman who hummed that song under his breath before he stood up before a hostile House to speak against a measure that he knew to be wrong and cowardly; and Jack Cresley, with the knowledge of what had happened, felt himself strengthened for the future conflict as he sang the anthem of his school. Every line in the chorus meant much to him that night.

"The world is all a playing-field,
And life is all a game.
So play it square, and though you fail

You will not be to blame.
Keep on however hard it goes,
Play straight and keep to rule;
Though you go down you still keep high
The honour of the school."

Time after time the chorus was repeated by the school. When it was finished the Head motioned to Jack to sit down beside him and Mordridge.

And so the evening went. Song followed song, and finally the concert was at an end. "Good-nights" were shouted from group to group, and the old Hall was left deserted.

Jack and Cantley had gone out together. The rain was pouring in torrents across the quad as Ted bade his chum "Good-night." Then one by one the lights went out, and soon the School of Cressingham was left in darkness. Jack had taken his father's photograph from his box, and he gazed at it for a long time.

"Poor old dad!" he murmured. "I'll do my best to-morrow." It's what you would like me to do."

And in the little house by the school-gate old Jim Rood lay listening to the rain, and when a particularly big drop hit his window-pane he murmured:

"Good, good!" It'll be a great day for Mr. Cresley to-morrow; a great day!"

Jim Rood was right. From the time that the school innings was over until well nigh breakfast next morning, the rain had never ceased. It had poured down as if to make up for the drought of the past five weeks. When the school bell rang for morning prep, the outlook was not too encouraging, but by nine o'clock it was over; the clouds dispersed, the sun came out, and the prospect of play became considerably brighter.

"It this sun keeps out," said Cantley to Jack, "it will be a real glut-pot of a wicket after the first hour. It won't take long for the rain to soak in, and the top of the wicket will get knocked off, if our chaps can keep anything like a length."

"It's bad luck on the Old Boys," replied Jack, "after the plumb bit of stuff we batted on yesterday. It's all in the game, however, and if they don't save the innings, we've got a rare good chance of whacking 'em. They haven't been beaten since I've been at the dear old school."

It was with a heavy heart that the captain went through the two hours morning school. The minutes seemed to crawl along, and it seemed almost a lifetime before the time came to don his flannels.

Ted saw that he was not in the mood for conversation, and held himself aloof, while they were changing. But once on the field, Cantley felt that the best thing to do would be to try and drag Jack's thoughts away from his misfortune.

"Buck up, old fellow," he said, "it's no use thinking of other things. The problem to be faced at present is, how to get these Old Boys out. I suppose you'll have a go at the top end, but Eustace will be no earthly use until the foothold gets a bit

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drier. Who will you put on in his place?"

"I suppose Brown had better have a shot," answered Jack. "He's not a bad hand at keeping down the runs, and until the effect of the heavy roller wears away we shall want someone to do that. But candidly, Ted, old boy, I don't feel as if I could raise a gallop, even to save my life. But anyhow, I'll try. I see they are sending in their hitters to force the game as long as the wicket's easy."

Jack's first over was by no means a good one, and Mordridge, who opened the innings with Jordan, another Blue, treated it rather severely. Altogether, that first produced fourteen runs. It was not a good start for the school, and Jack rather felt the situation. For the life of him he could not keep his thoughts from dwelling on his own wretchedness.

He felt his enthusiasm for the game slowly dwindling away. Meanwhile, Brown had been pegging away at the other end, and although a couple of over-pitched balls, owing, perhaps, to the difficulty of the batsmen obtaining a firm foothold, escaped proper treatment, he started with a maiden over.

Jack's second over was, if anything, worse than the first, though less runs were made off it. Mordridge couldn't make head or tail of it. Why on earth Jack's length was so absolutely bad, he couldn't understand.

There was absolutely no reason for a bowler of Jack's calibre pitching up such absolute rubbish. Mordridge made up his mind, however, that he might as well take advantage of

Jack's weakness, whatever it was. He determined to go for him next over.

Brown bowled another maiden, and then Mordridge set out to score. He lifted Jack's first two balls to the rails. The third was even shorter, and he pulled it to leg for four. The next was a fair ball, and he patted it back to Jack. The last he cut for one.

He could do little, however, with the perfect length of Brown, and, indeed, was a trifle lucky in escaping from a ball which nipped back quickly from the off, and just missed the leg stump. The ball went for a bye, and he again faced Jack.

It was again the same tale, only more so. Jack's bowling was hit to all quarters of the field, and the hopes of the school rapidly dwindled. Any change is better than no change at all, and Jack, arguing with himself that it could not be possible for anyone to send down poorer stuff, decided, despite the slippery foothold, to put Eustace on in his place, and, after an uneventful over from Brown, Eustace wound himself up.

"I don't think I should have done that if I had been Cresley," said Mr. Croome, Jack's housemaster, to the Head, "it is hardly a fast bowler's wicket. Even if he can get a foothold, the ball's bound to come along at an easy pace."

"That may be," the Head replied, "but he can hardly be more expensive than Cresley, and a change from slow to fast bowling is apt to unsettle a batsman, even when he is well in."

He had hardly finished talking before a shout went up, which increased in volume as it neared the quarter in which the juniors were situated. The change had taken effect. In attempting to pull a short ball Jordan cocked the ball up between the wickets, for Eustace to bring off a simple catch. The dangerous partnership was broken up, and the most dangerous hitter of the Old Boys' side disposed of.

Eustace floundered all over the place, despite the liberal bespattering of the footholds with sawdust, and once he all but measured his length on the wicket. It was plainly evident that to persevere with him would not be a paying policy; Jack decided to resume himself. There was a marked change in his first two overs, and although he could not keep Mordridge from scoring, he frequently stuck up his partner.

However, it was to Brown that the second wicket fell, but not before the half century had appeared. The ball had begun to take pieces out of the turf, and Mordridge patted the turf anxiously.

"If we can get rid of Mordridge," whispered Cantley to Jack, "they'll have all their work cut out to save the follow even now."

The newcomer did not seem at all comfortable, shaping very indifferently at Brown. The change from a fast to slow wicket coming so rapidly had apparently not upset him. His forward lunges at the breaking ball did not presage a long stay, nor, in this case, were appearances deceptive. Jack soon took his measure, luring him out to a slow ball with just enough break on to beat the bat. It was a clever bit of bowling, and with this success Jack's confidence returned. The fourth and fifth batsman fell to him, and even Mordridge was compelled to act on the defensive. The Old Boys' skipper had helped himself pretty freely to an over or two off Brown, and he was evidently intent on forcing the pace at that end rather than at Jack's.

So effectually did he perform on Brown that another change was decided upon, and the latest recruit of the Cressingham team underwent a trial. At any time it is rather a nerve-racking moment, be it batsman or bowler, when the candidate for colours' honour arrives for showing off his paces. It may be taken for granted that the somewhat diminutive youth—Medicott—who was called upon to put an end to the devastating effects of Mordridge's hitting, would, if he had had any say in the matter at all, have chosen any other moment but this for his debut. However, a slow left-hander, even of moderate prowess, is, on a sticky wicket, transmogrified into an invaluable engine of destruction. One great virtue of Medicott as a bowler was that he was not afraid to toss the ball up. He did on this occasion, with the result that Mordridge added eight more runs to his score off the first two balls.

Medicott kept his head. The third ball he slung into the air well wide of the off-stump. Slinging his left foot well across the wicket, Mordridge hit the ball with all his might. The ball skimmed through the air never more than a few feet from the

ground—just such a stroke that never fails to elicit the applause of a critical and appreciative crowd. It did so on this occasion; but scarcely had the spontaneous outburst commenced, when Jack, standing at extra-cover, was seen to hurl himself full length forward, and then, with knees and elbows touching the ground, the ball came to rest in his capacious paws.

It was a brilliant capture, all the more astounding in its very unexpectedness. The applause of this feat mingled with appreciation of the fine innings of the visiting captain, as that worthy wended his way to the pavilion. With the departure of Mordridge the end soon came, and the Old Boys were left with the dismal prospect of batting once again on a wicket which could, with some assurance, be described as a bowler's "paradise."

No wicket is so bad that the roller will not, for a certain period, make it more or less easy. The length of that period depends on prevailing conditions. When a fierce sun shines down on a rain-deluged wicket with that wicked intensity which even in England is not absent in the month of July, the time allowed a batsman before the ball begins to play pranks is very limited. The first pair of batsmen in that second innings of the Old Boys by forcing cricket put on 40 runs, Mordridge's being the first wicket to fall. And then came the end. Failure succeeded failure, and the innings closed for the insignificant total of 60.

No one could look at Jack's bowling, and those who attempted heroic measures by jumping out to drive merely committed suicide, for the School fielding was at the top of its form, and no possible chance went astray. That the Old Boys should be defeated under the circumstances that ruled was not surprising, but the manner in which defeat was brought upon them was astonishing. It was a record win, and a record all-round performance of one man, and that man Jack Cresley!

Jack knocked at the door of the Head's study.

"Come in!" he heard the doctor say.

Queer memories came back to Jack. He remembered the "Come in" of his junior days. Miserable enough he had felt in far-away times, but never so miserable as at the present moment.

He opened the door. The Head was seated at his desk; he welcomed Jack with a smile.

"Congratulations, Cresley," he said, holding out his hand. "You played excellently to-day. I thought nerves had got hold of you at the beginning of the game, but you pulled out all right. I'm looking for great things from you when you go up to Oxford, not only in cricket, but in other spheres as well."

Jack took the proffered hand.

"I want to ask you to let me go down to-morrow, sir," he said, "I've had a letter from my father, and he is in business difficulties. I should like to go home at once, sir. The matter is urgent."

"Eh? That's bad luck," said the Head. "But we'll hope it's nothing serious. Certainly you may go home. I am very sorry, my boy, that you should say good-bye to your school like this. But cheer up! I've no fear of you. Play the game, Cresley! I know you will, and we'll hope things sort out all right. Let me know how they go. If you wish, you can get off to-night. Arrange to have your things sent on. And now, good-bye, my boy!"

Jack left the room, and returned to his own study. Cantley was there, and Jack told him about his interview with the Head.

"You'll see to my stuff, Ted, old man. And, I say, I want to clear out quietly. There's a train in half an hour. I'll slide now. No, don't come to the station, old man; we'll say good-bye now—at least, good-bye as Cressinghamites. I'll look you up at home shortly."

The two chums gripped hands; and half an hour later Jack gazed through the window of a third-class carriage across the fields towards the towers of Cressingham. The cricket-fields stretched down to the side of the railway, and Jack muttered a school-boy oath as he saw four juniors chucking about a ball on the carpet, and a smile broke over his face when he noticed old Rood emerge from the pavilion. But the train was round the curve behind the wood, and Cressingham disappeared.

That journey to London Jack still looks upon as the two most unhappy hours of his life. After what seemed an eternity to Jack, the train reached King's Cross. The roar of the traffic helped to lift Jack from himself. He got into the tube which carried him

out to the suburb where he lived. His father had not yet come home. He was busy in the office.

Jack rang him up, only to find that he had gone, and was on the way home. At that moment the butler entered, to ask "if Master Jack would have something to eat?"

"No, thanks, Greig!" he said. "I'll wait till the paper comes in."
"Thank you, sir!" said Greig, as he left the room.

It was now nearly nine o'clock. The long shadows were falling across the room—Mr. Cresley's study. Jack walked over to the fireplace. Above it hung a full-length picture of a girl in evening-dress. It was Jack's mother. She had died when Jack was a baby, a year or so after her marriage.

"Poor old dad!" Jack murmured. "I'm a selfish brute to think of my own troubles!"

Just at that moment he heard the front-door bell ring. There was a muffled conversation in the hall, and old Greig appeared, with a white face. "Oh, Master Jack, Master Jack!" he said. "There's been an accident, and your father's been injured! He's in St. Bartholomew's, and—"

Jack waited to hear no more. He slipped past the trembling butler and out into the hall. A policeman was standing there.

"Yes, sir. Taxicab, sir, run into motor-bus. Can't tell you if it's serious or not. Shall I get a taxi, sir?"

Half an hour later Jack stood at the door of the big hospital. He was ushered into the waiting-room by an attendant, and ten minutes later a young house-surgeon came in. He laid his hand on Jack's shoulder.

"I'm sorry, boy," he said, "your father died ten minutes ago!"

The days between his father's death and the funeral were a nightmare to Jack. But at last it was all over. A group of gentlemen were gathered in the library of his father's house, and the lawyer was reading the will. Everything was left to Jack. Cantley's father had come over, and he and the lawyer had taken complete charge of everything.

"Jack," he had said, "your poor father and myself were very dear friends. I want you to treat me as your own friend now."

Some weeks later Jack learned his position. Besides the house and the furniture and two hundred pounds, he was the owner of twenty thousand pounds in the form of a gold-mine in South Australia. The mine had previously turned out a failure, and as far as he knew was worthless. He had gone to stay with Cantley's people. The house was sold, and Jack found himself the owner of two thousand pounds and the mine. His father had invested all his capital in it.

One day Jack received a letter. It was signed "John Claverly, an old friend of your father's," and asked for an appointment, suggesting a quiet hotel in the Strand at four the following afternoon. Jack showed the letter to Mr. Cantley, and the latter advised him to see the sender.

"At the same time, Jack," he said, "I've no idea who this Claverly is, and I thought I knew most of your father's friends. Still, go and see him."

At four the following afternoon Jack stood at the door of the hotel. "You're the young gentleman to see Mr. Claverly," the doorkeeper asked. "John," he shouted to one of the liftboys, "show this gentleman Mr. Claverly's room, Number 38!"

Two minutes later Jack was in the presence of the stranger. He was a man of medium height, with broad shoulders and a dark complexion. Jack took an instinctive dislike to him. However, his greeting was warm enough.

"Come away, my boy, come away!" he said. "I only heard of your poor father's death three days ago. I was on the sea when it happened, on my way home from Australia. Your father and I were great friends out there. Roughed it together. Well, lad, let's come to the point. I hear your father's money was all in the Barenegarry Mine. Rotten thing that! Don't know however Cresley put his money in! Well, that's neither here nor there. I understand that your father had twenty thousand pounds in it. I've got sheep up that way. Struck it rich there, as a matter of fact, and I want the mine land. It's not worth more than two hundred pounds as land, but in consideration of the plant on the mine, and so on, and more, my boy, in consideration of your father's friendship with me, I'll give you five thousand pounds down for it now!"

Jack was a bit astounded, but he was a clear-headed youngster, and he wondered why Claverly should be so

well-informed of his father's affairs if he had only been in the country three days. Besides, it was a curious coincidence that he should want farm land near the mine.

"It's very good of you, sir!" said Jack.
"Stop it, boy!" answered the other. "Look here, suppose we settle the matter now. Let's slip along to your lawyer's at once!"

"I'd prefer to think it over, if you don't mind," said Jack.
"Very good, my boy," answered Claverly, and Jack began to think he must be genuine. "Certainly think it over! I'll be at the hotel for another week."

On his return, Jack immediately told Mr. Cantley every detail of his interview.

Mr. Cantley was dubious, and sat a long time without speaking. Finally he jumped to his feet.

"Look here, Jack," he said, "I've got it! I'm certain there's something in it all—some mystery that wants clearing up. You're young, and I know you to be sensible. Why not go out to Australia yourself and look into things? Whatever happens you will at least learn the truth, and the experience will do you good."

A light gleamed in Jack's eye.
"You've struck it, sir," he said. "I'll find out the truth about the Barenegarry Mining Company by going to Australia myself."

A Change of Fortune!

Mr. Cantley was a man who believed in getting things done with-

camp, and consequently he kept in splendid physical condition.

The other acquaintance was of equal delight to Jack. He had inherited from his mother a great love of music, and at school his development as a pianist had been the delight of the old schoolmaster. One day he wandered into the music-room of the Galatea. It was empty except for one person—a girl, who was seated at the piano accompanying herself as she sang. Her voice was very beautiful, but it was obvious that she was handicapped by having to play her own accompaniment.

When she finished her song, Jack went forward.

"I hope you will not think me presumptuous," he said. "But I'd be very glad to play for you."

The girl turned round and smiled a clear, sunny smile, without a trace of embarrassment.

"That will be good of you!" she said, and without more ado got up from the piano-stool, and Jack sat down.

Time flew very quickly then, and a burst of applause at the end of one of the songs brought both of them back to earth. A big, powerful man was standing watching them, with a smile on his face.

"That's been a real treat, Helen!" he said.

"Hallo, father!" said the girl. "I didn't know we had an audience. I've discovered a splendid accompanist, haven't I? This is my father, Mr.—". She looked inquiringly at Jack.

There was just one person on board the ship who worried Jack, and that unfortunately was his cabin-mate, a gentleman from the lands of the Stars and Stripes, who gloried in the name of Potiphar K. Pearson. For the first few days of the voyage the sea was too much for Potiphar, who kept to his bunk and bemoaned the fact that he was on a British steamer. When he finally came to himself he made Jack's life very weary by continually relating stories of his prowess, especially in the fistic art. To hear him speak you would naturally have supposed that he had fought every champion, and that Carpentier would have about as much chance with him as a cart-horse would have against a thorough-bred in the Derby. He bored Jack terribly, and the latter determined to play a trick on him.

Potiphar was unaware of the existence of Grid, so Jack took the boxer into his confidence, and the latter was delighted to help him in the plot.

"I say, Pearson," Jack said to his cabin-mate one morning, "there are one or two of us keeping ourselves in condition with the gloves in the morning. Why don't you come down and show us a thing or two?"

"Waal, Cresley," the other replied, "I'd be real glad to do it, but say I've got a big difficulty in holdin' back my punch, and I might hurt somebody."

"Oh, well, we'll take the risk; it's all in the game!" said Jack. "Come on along now."

Pearson, or P. K., as he liked to call himself, was a big fellow, and must

at Grid; but he couldn't hit the boxer. It was tap, tap, and Grid was dancing away again. But soon Grid began to puff and blow. He appeared tired out, and his legs began to give. This was the little ruse that Jack and he had arranged. P. K. thought he had got him, and rushed him to the ropes. Grid edged back to the corner-post, and leaned against it. Then P. K. let drive. Grid slipped like lightning, and P. K.'s fist crashed on the post. He let out a yell of pain, and the spectators burst into a shout of laughter. Jack went to the corner, and helped P. K. off with his glove. His hand was not seriously damaged, but now that it was all over Jack felt a bit ashamed of himself. The American looked so flabbergasted. Jack explained the joke, and, to his surprise, P. K. showed no annoyance, but, on the contrary, burst into a hearty fit of laughter.

"Well, I'm blowed!" he said, and, turning to Grid, added: "Say, I'll have to claim some off you, won't I?"

After that P. K. was a changed man. He came down to sparring practice with Jack every morning, was a great success at the deck sports meetings, and even a greater at the dances in the evening. He was as full of tricks as Jack, and had his own back not long afterwards. The weather was now becoming very warm. Jack woke one morning to find himself bathed in perspiration, and P. K. and the ship's doctor looking down at him.

"Can't make it out. I'm afraid we'll have to isolate him. May be something infectious," the doctor was saying.

"Say, boy," said P. K., "this is hard luck! You've developed some extraordinary malady, and I guess Miss Allen's going to play her own accompaniments the rest of this voyage."

"I can't make out what's wrong with you," said the doctor. "I'll come back in an hour and see you again. Meanwhile, keep well covered up. And you come away, Pearson. I can't have you here. We'll get your stuff shifted later and disinfected, just in case it's anything serious."

The door closed on the doctor and P. K., and Jack lay in absolute misery. He became hotter and hotter, but tried to obey the doctor's instructions. But suddenly he could bear it no longer. He threw off the blankets and sprang from his bunk. Then it dawned on him that there was something wanting in the cabin. What could it be? He waited for a minute or two, and realisation came to him. The electric fan had stopped, and someone had turned on the radiator.

P. K. had certainly scored, Jack had to confess to himself as he slipped along to the bath-room and plunged into cold water. This amateur Turkish bath wouldn't do him any harm. He returned to his cabin, and met P. K. at the door.

"Warm morning!" murmured the latter.

"Yes; too warm for driving in posts!" replied Jack.

And for the rest of the voyage this was always their morning greeting.

One evening Jack and Helen were leaning on the rail, having a hot discussion on the relative abilities of English and Australian cricketers. Helen was a keen follower of the game, and had seen several Test Matches. Afterwards Jack could never tell exactly what occurred. All he knew was that, in the middle of the debate as to whether Clem Hill was a greater player than C. B. Fry, the ship gave a terrible lurch, and Jack found himself rolling over and over across the deck. He jumped to his feet. He could hear bells ringing, and evidently the engines had stopped. Jack looked round for Helen, but she was nowhere to be seen. He ran to the side, and in the clear light of the moon he saw something floating in the water some distance from the ship. Instinct told Jack that Helen, who had been sitting on the rail, had been thrown into the water by the shock, and, with a cry of "Man overboard!" Jack dived into the water. He was a strong swimmer. The water was warm, and, clad as he was in light flannels, he was not encumbered. He struck out boldly in the direction where he had seen the floating object, and, sure enough, it was the girl, and Jack was greeted with a "Hallo! What's happened?"

Helen was treading water, and very little put about by the accident.

"I don't know," said Jack. "Are you all right?"

(Another grand long instalment of this great sports yarn by Gilbert L. Jessop will appear in next Monday's issue of the Boys' FRIEND. Order your copy NOW!)



TERRIBLE NEWS! Jack Cresley was standing by the fireplace when Greig, the butler, flung open the door and rushed in. "Master Jack—sir—Your father has met with a serious accident—probably dying—I"

out delay. Jack left himself entirely in the hands of his chum's father, and in three weeks' time he found himself on the Galatea, at Tilbury, waving good-bye to Mr. Cantley, and bound for Australia. He had referred Claverly to Mr. Cantley, and the latter had curtly informed the stranger that Jack had no intention of selling out his mine shares. Jack had not seen Claverly since.

So here he was started out on his great adventure. Jack was a good sailor, and the troubles of sea-sickness did not worry him in the least. The monotony of the long voyage did not affect him. There was much that was new to him, and much to learn. He made friends quickly with the majority of the passengers, but there were two parties of travellers for whose acquaintance he thanked himself in after days. Jim Grid, a famous light-weight boxer, with trainer and sparring partners, was crossing to South Africa, where Jim was booked for a series of big fights.

The boxer was training seriously every day, and on one occasion, when Jack was looking in at the sparring, he was asked if he would care to put on the gloves. He did so, and the manager and Grid were so delighted with his showing, that he was made a welcome member of the little training-

Jack introduced himself, and the big man shook hands with him.

"Why, you're the youngster who spars with Grid, aren't you? My name's Allen. Are you going the whole way?"

Jack said that he was.

"Well, now, we're in luck, aren't we, Helen?" said Mr. Allen. "You see," he went on, turning to Jack, "I'm a solicitor in Adelaide. My daughter, Helen, has just been home in London for a year, studying at the Royal College of Music. She's been bemoaning the fact that she didn't know anyone on board who could play really well, and so keep her in trim. She's to sing a lot in Australia soon. Then you drop from the skies. Well, all I've got to say to you, young man, don't smash your fingers on Grid's jaw, or Helen will probably shoot you. Now, you've just time to sing me that last song again before lunch."

So the days on board-ship were pleasant ones for Jack. His morning was spent with Grid and his sparring-partners, and in the afternoon there were always sports of some kind. Then there were concerts and dancing in the evening. The weather became much warmer, and the fun on the ship continued till very late every night.

have turned the scale somewhere about thirteen stone. Jack and he walked down to the gymnasium, which was one of the latest additions to the Galatea, and there found two of Grid's sparring-partners pushing each other round with the gloves in the improvised ring. Grid was standing looking on. Jack introduced P. K., and explained that the latter was going to give them some tips. Grid invited P. K. to put on the gloves.

"Say, I don't see anything just my weight," said P. K.

"Oh, I'll take you all right," said Grid; "and I'll just bet you half-a-crown you can't get me in three rounds!"

The big fellow laughed.

"I'll let you down easy," he said. "Come on," said Grid. "Is the bet on?"

"Sure!" replied P. K.

The gloves were adjusted, and the two began to spar. Then the fun commenced. The ring was only some twelve feet square, and Grid stepped in, tapped P. K. on the nose, slipped under a vicious swing, came up right behind his opponent, and tapped him in the back of the neck.

"I'm here, in case you didn't know!" he said.

P. K. turned, and rushed blindly

A SPLendid LONG COMPLETE ROOKWOOD YARN BY OWEN CONQUEST.



Danger Ahead!

A GREAT STORY
OF THE
FAMOUS CHUMS
OF
ROOKWOOD
. SCHOOL.

The 1st Chapter.

Muffin Makes a Discovery.

Tubby Muffin gave an apprehensive start, as there was a footstep outside the prefects' room at Rookwood.

Muffin of the Fourth had no business whatever in the prefects' room, an apartment sacred to the great men of the Sixth. Any prefect finding him ensconced in an armchair there would have felt called upon to administer a cuff as a reward for his cheek. That was why Reginald Muffin sat up apprehensively as he heard the footfall outside.

It was not the comfortable armchair that had tempted Tubby into the forbidden territory. It was the fact that the prefects' room had been quite deserted, and that Tubby was looking for an asylum of refuge. Higgs of the Fourth was looking for Tubby. Tubby was very anxious not to be found.

There had been a misunderstanding about a cake in Study No. 2. Higgs had a hasty hand and a heavy boot, and Tubby did not want to meet him till his wrath had had time to cool.

There was a senior match in progress on Big Side, and the Sixth were all out of doors; so the prefects' room had seemed quite a safe refuge to Tubby. Higgs was not likely to look for him there. Master Muffin had made himself quite comfortable, and devoured the remnants of the cake from his pocket with considerable satisfaction. And then there came that sudden footfall, and Tubby sat up like a startled rabbit.

"Oh dear!" murmured Tubby. Whether it was Higgs of the Fourth or a prefect, Tubby did not know; but he knew that in either case he did not want to be found. If it was a prefect, it was most likely Carthew, the bully of the Sixth, who was no cricketer, and was not playing that afternoon. Carthew was as bad as Higgs, or worse. He was quite certain to kick the fat junior out of the room, with unnecessary vigour, if he found him there.

Tubby rolled out of the armchair, and stood gasping for a moment. His fat brain did not work rapidly. But as the door-handle turned, Tubby Muffin made an instinctive dive behind the big armchair. There he crouched on his knees, concealed by the high back of the chair, breathlessly hoping for the best.

The door opened. Tubby could not see who entered, and could not be seen. But the footfall struck him as curiously light and cautious. He heard the door close very quietly.

Tubby wondered. Certainly it could not be a prefect who entered his own quarters in that stealthy way. Neither could it be Higgs, who was loud and heavy-footed. The fat Classical wondered whether it might be Jimmy Silver, or some other reckless youth, seeking to play some "jape" in the sacred apartment during the absence of the prefects. But he took care not to show himself. He was not taking any risks.

For a moment or two there was silence, and then cautious footfalls crossed the room—towards the telephone by the window.

Still Tubby could not see who it was.

But he crouched lower, and spied under the chair, and caught a glimpse of a very elegant pair of boots, of turned-up trousers, and an inch of silk socks of the most expensive kind.

Then he knew!

He knew those boots and those silken socks. It was Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency of the Fourth who had entered the prefects' room so cautiously and stealthily, and was now standing before the telephone.

Tubby Muffin grinned. He had nothing to fear from Montmorency; and there was no reason why he should not show himself now, if he liked. Montmorency had "sneaked" into the prefects' room to use the telephone, taking advantage—like Muffin—of the fact that all the Sixth were out.

Tubby Muffin had nothing to fear from the dandy of Rookwood, excepting, perhaps, a glance of lofty contempt—which would not have hurt Tubby!

But he did not move.

His curiosity was aroused now. Next to greediness, inquisitiveness was Reginald Muffin's besetting sin. And he was very much interested in Montmorency and his affairs—as were, indeed, less inquisitive fellows than Muffin. There had been more talk about Montmorency than about any other fellow in the Lower School at Rookwood.

So Tubby Muffin sat tight, as it were.

He heard Montmorency remove the receiver from the hook and ring up the exchange. He heard him give a number, and caught the word "Trunks." Then the receiver was replaced, and Montmorency strolled to the window to look out into the quad.

Muffin crouched closer in the cover of the big chair.

Evidently Montmorency had no suspicion that anyone beside himself was in the room. And from his position at the window, he could see whether any of the Sixth came towards the House. He had given a number, and was waiting for his trunk call. Tubby Muffin's brain was not specially active, but he guessed that Cecil Cuthbert was telephoning home.

Tubby felt a tingle of curiosity all over his fat person.

It did not even occur to him to have any scruple about playing the eavesdropper in this way. Tubby had a conscience, but it was a very accommodating one, and seldom gave him any worry.

Buzzzzz.

Montmorency swung round quickly from the window as the bell rang, and hurried to pick up the receiver. He was "through."

"Is that you, uncle?"

Uncle!

Tubby Muffin listened with all his ears, which had been made unusually large by kind Nature, as if for this very purpose! Montmorency was speaking to his uncle—the rich uncle who had adopted him and sent him to Rookwood. He was telephoning to Montmorency Court, his uncle's stately "place" in the country. At Montmorency Court Cecil Cuthbert was supposed to have spent his expensive earlier youth. The story that he had once been a boy in buttons at Goby Hall was well-known, and was still a subject for jokes in the Fourth—fellows who did not like Montmorency often alluded to him as "George Huggins." But that story had been knocked on the head—it had few believers now.

Tubby trembled with curiosity. Was he going to hear some of the actual facts? Tubby would have

given a great deal to hear what was said at the other end of the wire. But, naturally, he could only hear what Montmorency spoke into the transmitter.

"Yes, it's Cecil speakin'. Yes, it was all right about that scoundrel Lurchey. He owned up before a crowd of fellows that he had been mistaken, and that I was not the George Huggins he had known at Goby Hall. I'm afraid you had to shell out rather severely, uncle."

Tubby grinned. Undoubtedly he was beginning to hear some of the facts!

"So long as he keeps away from this neighbourhood that will be all right," went on Montmorency, in reply to something from his uncle, unheard by Tubby. "He will keep away so long as you square him. I'm not afraid of Lurchey now that it's in your hands. You're awfully good to me, uncle!"

There was a touch of real feeling in Montmorency's voice, and Tubby Muffin wondered to hear it.

"It's all serene now," Montmorency continued. "Lurchey's owning up knocked the whole thing on the head. Sergeant Kettle knows; but he is mum. But—but there's another danger, uncle."

There was a pause, and again Tubby would have given anything to hear what Montmorency was hearing at the receiver.

"There's a fellow here named Lattrey"—Montmorency was speaking again. "A rank outsider—a dingy cad who detests me because I'll have nothin' to do with him. He suspects that Lurchey was squared. No, I know he can't prove anything, and he's a rotter anyhow, and nobody takes any notice of him. I've heard that he came near being expelled once. But he's told me that his father's a private inquiry agent—some sort of a detective—and he's written to him to inquire about me."

Tubby Muffin winked at the back of the armchair.

He was quite enjoying himself now.

"I don't know whether his father will take it up—probably he won't—but if he does, it will be easy enough for him to go down to Goby Hall and learn the whole story."

Tubby Muffin wondered what Montmorency would have said if he could have known that he, Tubby, was learning the whole story, behind the armchair!

"Lattrey is an utter cad and outsider, and his father's probably of the same kidney. He could be squared easily enough. You can find him out, I should think, without much trouble. I'm givin' you a lot of trouble, uncle—I never supposed that my comin' to Rookwood would mean all this. But if I'm to play the game out, Lattrey will have to be bottled up. If—if the fellows knew about Goby Hall, and—and—" Montmorency's voice faltered.

There was a pause. Montmorency was listening to the voice over the wires, and it was some moments before he spoke again.

"Thanks, uncle! If he's squared, he will shut Lattrey up fast enough, and it will be all serene. Good! Oh, good! You've taken a weight off my mind. All serene now! Good-bye, uncle."

Montmorency hung up the receiver. He turned away from the telephone, and crossed to the door. As the door closed behind him, Tubby Muffin rose from behind the armchair, and

grinned cheerfully. Tubby knew it all now! Sergeant Kettle, who knew, was silent; Mr Lurchey, who knew, had been 'squared' and got rid of; Lattrey, who might find out, was to be 'bottled' up. But Tubby Muffin knew—knew it all, now; and the hapless upstart of Rookwood, who sailed so loftily under false colours, was at the mercy of Tubby!

The 2nd Chapter. Lattrey's Little Game!

"Bless it!" There was a smell of methylated spirit in the end study, and the sound of a grousing voice.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome came in, red and warm from the cricket, and found Arthur Edward Lovell making the tea.

At all events, it was Arthur Edward's intention to make the tea. So far, he had spilled methylated spirit over the fender and over his trousers, and had succeeded in starting what looked like a furnace, or a volcano in eruption, in the grate. On closer inspection, it could be seen that it was not a furnace or a volcano, but a spirit stove liberally supplied with spirit—very liberally supplied. A wavering tongue of flame soared nearly as high as the mantelpiece.

"Bless it!" Arthur Edward Lovell said "bless it"; but his look and tone really did not seem to be calling down blessings on the spirit stove.

"Hallo, setting the school on fire, old scout?" asked Jimmy Silver generally.

"Br-r-r-r!" "I say, Lovell, this study isn't insured," said Raby anxiously.

"Fathead!"

"Is it an experiment?" asked Newcome, in wonder. "Are you trying to do some of the stunts that belong to the Modern side?"

Lovell turned a red and wrathful face on his chums.

"If that's your thanks to a fellow who comes in early to get tea—" he began warmly.

"Oh, you're getting tea?" asked Raby.

"What the thump do you think I'm doing?" roared Lovell.

"Blessed if I know! Producing a cheap imitation of Vesuvius, I should say."

"Ass!"

"Better pass the word for the fire-buckets," suggested Newcome.

"Look here," roared Lovell, "if you fellows can handle this rotten stove better than I can—"

"Go it, old chap!" said Jimmy Silver soothingly. "Put the kettle on!"

"Can't put the kettle on till the flame goes down a bit, owl!"

"But why that flame?" asked Raby innocently.

"Do you think I spilled the spirit on purpose, you chump?" howled Lovell. "The dashed bottle jerked, and the dashed spirit went all over the dashed stove and the dashed fender, and over my dashed trousers, too. If you silly owls would rather light a fire on a blazing afternoon you—"

"Not at all, old scout!" said Jimmy Silver, laughing. "Better keep your bags away from the flame if they've got spirit on them."

"Kids shouldn't play with methylated spirit," said Raby, shaking his head; "it's dangerous."

Lovell breathed hard. His intentions had been really good; he had been going to surprise his chums with tea ready, when they came in. He had surprised them instead with a volcanic display; but that was not Lovell's fault.

"You dummies can boil the kettle," he said. "I'm going to wash off some of this stuff. And you can go and eat coke, you grinning asses!"

Lovell strode to the door, leaving the hapless stove still blazing merrily in the grate. As he strode wrathfully out, it happened that Mark Lattrey, of the Classical Fourth, arrived at the study doorway, with the intention of entering. There was a collision in the doorway, and Lovell staggered back, and Lattrey sat down.

"You silly owl!" roared Lovell.

"Oh!" gasped Lattrey.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jimmy Silver & Co.

"What do you mean by butting into a chap in his own doorway, Lattrey, you dummy?" howled Lovell.

"Oh, you silly goat, I didn't see you, till you rushed into me like a mad bull!" gasped Lattrey.

"I'll give you mad bull, you ass!"

Lovell started towards Lattrey, with hostile intentions. The collision really was not Lattrey's fault; but Lovell was excited, and apparently he was going to make Lattrey pay for the sins of the spirit-stove. Jimmy Silver caught him by the arm.

"Easy does it, old chap!" said Uncle James, of Rookwood, soothingly. "It wasn't his fault, you know."

"What does he want here?" snorted Lovell. "I suppose you haven't asked that cad to tea by any chance?"

"Oh, no!"

"It would be just like you," growled Lovell. "You'll be asking that silly snob Montmorency to tea next."

"But I haven't asked anybody to tea," said Jimmy Silver mildly.

"Well, it would be just like you!" said Lovell.

"My dear ass—"

"Oh, rats!"

Arthur Edward Lovell strode out of the study. The spirit-stove having, by this time, moderated its transports, so to speak, Raby succeeded in jamming the kettle on it. Lattrey—carefully dodging out of Lovell's way as that excited youth strode forth—came into the study, rather to the surprise of the Co. The end study was not on speaking terms with the shady youth who had the worst reputation in the Classical Fourth at Rookwood.

"Anything wanted, Lattrey?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Yes."

"Well, heave ahead," said the captain of the Fourth. "Sorry we can't ask you to tea—"

"I don't want tea with you," said Lattrey sourly.

"Then it's all right," said Jimmy urbanely. "To what do we owe the pleasure of this unexpected visit?"

"Oh, don't talk rot!" grunted Lattrey. "I've come here to speak to you, as captain of the Fourth. I think you ought to take the matter up."

"What matter?"

"Montmorency—or, rather, Huggins."

Jimmy Silver yawned portentously.

"Dear man, I'm fed up with Montmorency—right up to the chin," he said. "I don't want to hear anything more about him so long as I live. Wouldn't you rather talk cricket?"

"Don't be a goat!" howled Lattrey angrily. "You know that the fellow is a pretender, and an upstart; he's come to Rookwood calling himself Montmorency, and he's really named Huggins—"

"Huggins, or Muggins, or Juggins, it's all the same to me!" answered Jimmy Silver imperturbably. "Give him a rest."

"Where's the ham?" Raby was looking into the study cupboard.

"Has that fat villain Muffin been here?"

"I've been waiting for you to come in, Silver," said Lattrey. "I've had a letter from my father."

"No business of mine."

"It's about Montmorency."

Jimmy Silver raised his eyebrows.

"What on earth has your father got to do with Montmorency?" he exclaimed.

"My father's a private inquiry agent," said Lattrey, with a sour grin. "I've asked him to find out the facts about Montmorency. It's practically proved now that the fellow is a spoofer. All the school knows that he was recognised by that black-guard Lurchey as George Huggins, who was boy in buttons at Goby Hall and—"

"Lurchey's owned up that he was mistaken."

"He was squared, of course."

"Oh, rot!" said Jimmy Silver un- easily. "Anyhow, it's no business of mine."

"That cad ought to be shown up," said Lattrey. "He pitched me out of his study when I told him I wasn't taken in!"

"I dare say it served you right."

"Well, I'm going to have the truth out," said Lattrey. "My father's answered my letter. He's taking the matter up. He agrees with me that it's a duty to show up a fellow who comes to school like this under false colours. He looks on it as performing a service to the school and the Head; and, of course, making inquiries is his profession."

"The ham's gone!" said Raby. "Muffin must have been here. I'll skin that fat villain!"

"There's the eggs," said Newcome. "We can boil 'em if Lovell's left any methylated spirit."

"When is that dashed kettle going to boil?" inquired Jimmy Silver.

Lattrey scowled. There was a plentiful lack of interest in the subject of Montmorency—in the end study at least. But the cad of the Fourth was not to be denied.

"I think you ought to know what my father says, Silver," he said. "You ought to take the lead in sending that pretender to Coventry. Listen to this—"

"I don't want to hear it."

"Just listen!"

Lattrey took a letter from his

pocket and proceeded to read aloud from it, regardless of the evident disinclination in the study to hear it.

"I am very interested in what you tell me with regard to the boy Montmorency. Certainly the truth should be known, and it will be easy enough for me to ascertain the facts. The name is already familiar to me. A man named Huggins, who kept the Goby Arms in Surrey, made quite a sensation a year or two ago by a lucky speculation on the Stock Exchange, which made him a rich man. He bought a country estate, and changed his name by deed-poll to Montmorency. His place is called, I think, Montmorency Court. I have forgotten some other details, but there will be no difficulty in ascertaining the rest."

"That's all I need read out," said Lattrey. "But that makes it pretty clear, doesn't it?"

Lovell had come back into the study in time to hear the reading out of Mr. Lattrey's letter. Lattrey glanced at him. Lovell's dislike of the snob of the Fourth was well known, and Lattrey expected Arthur Edward at least to sympathise with him in his desire to "reveal the whole truth." But there was no sympathy in Lovell's look. He gave a most disparaging grunt.

"What the thump are you spying into the fellow's affairs for?" Lovell snapped. "If the man changed his name legally it's his name, isn't it? No need for you to spy it all out!"

"Hear, hear!" said Raby. Lattrey set his lips.

"He's a low rotter and a pretender!" he said. "He ought to be shown up, even if he did change his name legally."

"Oh, rats! Give him a rest!" "As captain of the Fourth, Silver—"

"Bow-wow!" said Jimmy Silver. "Do you mean that you won't take the matter up, even if I prove that he's an upstart under a false name?" exclaimed Lattrey savagely.

"On your own showing, the name isn't false," answered Jimmy Silver. "It's legal to change your name if you pay the fees for doing it."

"That doesn't alter the fact that he's really Huggins, just as Lurchey said, and that he was a servant in Goby Hall, and—"

"That wouldn't be against him if he wasn't such a snob now he's rich," said Lovell. "Any how, it's not our business."

"Exactly!" said Jimmy Silver. "Take your dashed news to some study that would like to hear it, Lattrey!"

"And shut the door after you!" said Newcome.

"You cheeky rotters!" shouted Lattrey, greatly exasperated.

Jimmy Silver picked up his cricket-bat.

"I give you two seconds—" he said.

One second was enough for Mark Lattrey. He jumped into the passage, and the door slammed after him.

The 3rd Chapter. Lattrey's Letter!

"Huggins!" The name was whispered, and it was followed by a laugh.

Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency coloured ever so slightly.

He was sauntering in the quadrangle with Townsend and Topham, his nutty and devoted chums—more devoted than ever since Mr. Lurchey's extraordinary story had been "knocked on the head."

Their attachment to their wealthy and aristocratic chum was quite touching, in fact.

If the Huggins story still survived, it was evidently due to Mark Lattrey, who had shown his father's letter about the Fourth Form, and revived the discussion on the subject thereby.

More than once the upstart of Rookwood had come very near exposure, and although he had taken his measures to meet this new danger, he was conscious that he still walked in slippery places.

Lattrey, Gower, and Peele were talking in a group, and the whisper of "Huggins" came from them as Montmorency & Co. strolled by.

Montmorency half-stopped, but Townsend touched his arm.

"Don't take any notice of the cads, Monty!" he whispered. "No good rovin' with them."

Montmorency nodded, and they walked on. They left Peele and Gower and Lattrey grinning.

"They're not worth noticin', old top," said Topham. "Everybody knows that Lattrey's only workin' this stunt because you won't speak to him."

"An' nobody believes a word of it," said Townsend.

"Quite so," assented Montmorency, his calm, smiling face giving no indication of the gnawing trouble in his breast. "But a fellow can't stand too much of this sort of annoyance. I've knocked Lattrey down once, and if he wants me to knock him down again—"

"Here's the car!" said Topham. The big Rolls-Royce came in sight. Cecil Cuthbert had telephoned for it, and it had come to take the nuts of the Fourth out that afternoon.

A good many envious glances followed the trio as they stepped into the car and it rolled away with them.

"Lucky bargee, that fellow Montmorency!" remarked Conroy of the Fourth.

"Huggins, you mean!" sneered Lattrey.

"Oh, rot!" "I'm expectin' a letter from my father to-day," said Lattrey sourly. "I fancy it will put the lid on."

Conroy turned away without replying. He did not like the uppish airs of Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency, but he had nothing in common with Lattrey and his set. And all the Fourth knew that Lattrey & Co. had striven to get Cecil Cuthbert into their own dingy set, and that Lattrey's enmity was based on his failure.

Lattrey was very anxious for the letter he was expecting that afternoon. Two or three days had elapsed since the first letter had reached him, and he considered that by this time his father should be in possession of

"What do you know about it, you fat duffer?" snapped Lattrey.

Tubby Muffin chuckled.

"More than you might think," he answered. "I could tell you something if I liked."

"Hallo! What keyhole have you been listening at now?" inquired Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Here's the letters, anyhow," remarked Gower. "Anything for you, Lattrey? I'm jolly keen on the news, for one."

"There won't be any!" chuckled Tubby Muffin.

"You seem to be jolly sure about it, Tubby," said Jimmy Silver, with a rather curious look at the fat Classical.

Tubby grinned. "I know what I know!" he remarked mysteriously.

"Very likely," assented Jimmy. "It isn't much, is it? Spread out thin on a threepenny bit, what you know wouldn't cover the coin, would it?"

"You wait and see!" said Tubby loftily. "I know something, I can tell you that. Some fellows get to know things. Is that a letter for you, Lattrey?"

"Yes!" growled Lattrey.

"From your pater?" asked Gower eagerly.

"Now for the giddy history!" said Peele.

"Hallo! Here's his noble nibs!" murmured Lovell.

Montmorency strolled up with

face. He had not the slightest doubt that the letter contained evidence that would crush Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency to the dust, and he was rather surprised by Monty's coolness. He could only conclude that the upstart was playing the game out to the end, with an iron nerve; though the end was now very near.

Montmorency came towards him. Lattrey put the letter behind him at once.

"Don't snatch!" he said mockingly.

"I wasn't thinkin' of snatchin' your rotten letter!" said the dandy of the Fourth contemptuously. "I've got a few words to say, and I want all the fellows to hear. There's somethin' about me in that letter?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Your father's some sort of a detective, and you've asked him to look into my family history, and tell you?"

"Exactly!" grinned Lattrey. "And the result's in that letter?"

"Quite so."

"Very good," said Montmorency quietly. "In that case, you're goin' to read that letter out before the fellows, and let them see it."

"What?" ejaculated Lattrey, in blank astonishment.

"My hat!" murmured Lovell. Montmorency glanced round again. "I appeal to you, Silver, as captain of the Form," he said. "If Lattrey's father tells him he has made a silly mistake, I've a right for all the

"I'll do as I like with my own letter."

"Not after what you've said. If you don't open that letter at once, and let it be seen, I'll take you to Mr. Dalton by the scruff of your neck, and ask him to judge between us," said Montmorency.

"Hear, hear!" said Townsend, greatly delighted. "That's the stuff to give him, old bean!"

"You'd better go ahead, Lattrey," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "You're bound to, after what you've said the last few days."

"I've no objection."

"Well, pile in, then."

With an angry scowl, for something like a dismayed misgiving was in his breast now, Lattrey tore open the letter. And a crowd of juniors gathered eagerly round.

The 4th Chapter. Quite a Surprise!

All eyes were fixed on Mark Lattrey as he unfolded the letter and looked at it. He read it, in silence. The expression on his face showed at once that the contents were not as he had hoped and expected.

Blank dismay and surprise were betrayed in his looks.

The juniors exchanged glances. Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency maintained his attitude of superb indifference. As for Tubby Muffin, he seemed to be suffering from something like internal convulsions. But nobody took the trouble to heed Reginald Muffin.

"Well?" said several voices at last, when Lattrey had evidently finished reading the letter, and yet did not speak.

"What's the giddy news?" asked Gower.

Lattrey stammered. "I—I—nothing!" he gasped. "My father doesn't mention—"

"Gammon!" said Townsend. "No good lyin', Lattrey!" said Montmorency coolly. "Show that letter up for the fellows to read."

"I refuse! I—"

Montmorency's grasp closed on Lattrey's wrist, as he sought to thrust the letter into his pocket.

"Let me go!" shouted Lattrey furiously.

The dandy of the Fourth had a grip like iron. He forced Lattrey's hand up, with the letter in it.

"Take that letter, Towny," he said.

"You bet!" grinned Townsend.

"Let me go!" yelled Lattrey. "I—I— Give me my letter, or I'll hit out!"

"You'll be sorry if you do."

"Let me go!"

"Rats!"

Townsend jerked the letter away, as Montmorency compressed his grip on Lattrey's wrist. Lattrey swung up his free hand, and struck Cecil Cuthbert full in the face.

"There, you cad! Oh!"

Montmorency released him, and struck back. Mark Lattrey went spinning along the floor.

"Get up an' have some more, if you want any, you cad!" said Montmorency quietly.

Lattrey sat up dazedly. But evidently he did not want any more. Montmorency wiped his cheek, where Lattrey's knuckles had touched, with a cambric handkerchief, as if to brush away a contamination. Townsend held up the letter, with a smiling face. Once more his confidence in his aristocratic chum was completely restored.

"Listen to this, you fellows!" he exclaimed.

And he proceeded to read aloud, with several of the juniors reading over his shoulders.

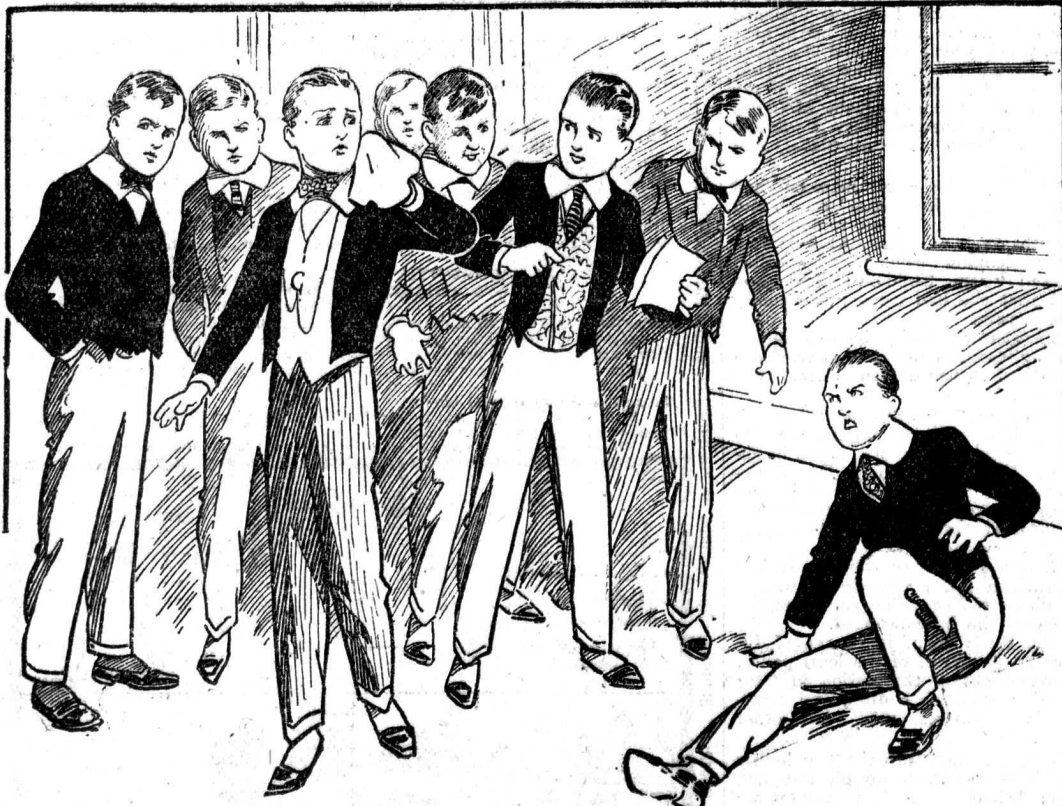
"My dear Mark,—I have made the fullest investigation, and find that you have made a very serious mistake. There is no connection whatever between Montmorency, of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, and anyone of the name of Huggins. His uncle, Mr. Montmorency, of Montmorency Court, is a gentleman of an old and well-established country family, of great wealth and very distinguished connections. I advise you to apologise to Master Montmorency, if you have hinted to him already of your very unfortunate suspicions."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Lovell. Little as Arthur Edward Lovell sympathised with the cad of the Fourth, he had expected Lattrey's view to turn out substantially correct. This formal and complete contradiction was a surprise.

"He, he, he!" came from Tubby Muffin. Master Muffin, at all events, was not surprised.

"Oh, gad!" said Peele. "So that's the end of your giddy investigations, Lattrey! Of all the asses—"

(Continued on col. 4, page 319.)



LATTREY'S LETTER! The cad of the Fourth went to the floor with a bump, and Townsend snatched the letter from him and prepared to read it out. Montmorency's history was now to be made public!

the required definite information. Lattrey had no doubt that the letter, when it came, would contain the fullest particulars of Montmorency's origin and real name, which could not fail to convince even Towny and Topsy.

And he knew that Monty's smart friends would drop him like a hot potato if the case was anything like proved. Towny & Co. had no use for a friend who had started life as a bootboy.

There were plenty of fellows, certainly such as Jimmy Silver & Co., who did not care how a chap had started in life, so long as he was decent. But Montmorency had alienated fellows of that sort by his uppish airs and his snobbish intolerance towards fellows less advantageously placed than himself. Once the truth was out he would not have a friend left in the school.

Lattrey waited for the letters that afternoon. Jimmy Silver, who was expecting—or, at least, hoping for—a remittance from home, came along and found Lattrey & Co. lounging round the letter-rack.

"Not in yet," said Lattrey, with a grin. "I hope to get some news for you by this post, Silver."

"I don't want to hear your news," said Jimmy Silver curtly.

"He, he, he!" That fat and un-musical cackle came from Reginald Muffin. "I say, Lattrey, bet you two to one you don't get any news!"

Townsend and Topham, the nutty trio, looking very cheery after their drive.

"Any letters, dear boys?" yawned Montmorency.

"Lattrey's got one!" grinned Higgs of the Fourth. "From his father."

Montmorency glanced round. A number of juniors had gathered round, most of them interested in the fact that Lattrey's expected letter had come at last, and wondering what was in it. Many very curious looks were fixed on Montmorency. But if he had anything to fear, he did not show it.

Townsend and Topham eyed him almost anxiously. Though their faith in their lofty chum had been restored, they felt, perhaps, a secret inward misgiving. Lattrey's loudly-expressed confidence had shaken them a little.

But Montmorency only smiled.

"This is getting rather thick," he remarked. "I'm rather new at Rookwood, and don't know all the manners and customs yet. Is it a rule here for a fellow's private affairs to be nosed into in this way, Silver?"

"No, it isn't!" answered Jimmy Silver shortly.

"Just a little new custom started for my benefit—what?"

Jimmy Silver shrugged his shoulders impatiently. He was annoyed with Lattrey for his prying investigations; but it was no business of his to interfere.

Lattrey had the letter in his hand, and there was an evil smile on his

fellows to know it. If he makes any libellous statements, I've a right to hear them, so that my uncle can take legal action. Isn't that right?"

"Right as rain," said Jimmy Silver. "After all your talk, Lattrey, you're bound to make that letter public."

"Yes, rather!" said Townsend and Topham together.

"It's only fair play," said Lovell. "Give every dog his due."

"Go it, Lattrey!" said Higgs. "You can't back out now."

"Back out!" exclaimed Lattrey angrily. "I intend to make it public, of course, to show that fellow up. He knows that!"

"Then, if we're both agreed, you can have no objection to goin' ahead," said Montmorency, with a curl of the lip.

"He, he, he!" came from Tubby Muffin.

Lattrey breathed hard. Montmorency's confidence staggered him; he simply could not understand it. If he had shared Tubby Muffin's experience in the prefect's room he would have understood. But he hadn't.

"I'll show the letter fast enough!" he exclaimed. "I—I'll read it first, and then—"

He made a movement.

"You won't take that letter away till it's been shown," said Montmorency grimly. "Open it at once!"

ONE OF THE BEST SCHOOLBOY ADVENTURE YARNS EVER PUBLISHED!



The Police Raid!

Don Darrel gained the town, which seemed to owe its importance and the size of its population to the large factory of some sort standing on its farther fringe.

Don was not impressed by it, and was less enamoured of its small, rustic-looking police-station when he saw it, and he decided to motor to Yarmouth, and tell his story there.

He had noticed a garage, and retraced his steps in it. In less than five minutes he had succeeded in hiring a really fast touring-car; in ten it was on the road, and heading towards Yarmouth, with the Boy with Fifty Millions seated beside the driver. In half an hour he was in the famous seaside resort on the East Coast, and the car was coming to a halt outside the police-station there.

Station-Sergeant McGrath, a keen-faced, keen-witted man, who would long since have held a higher rank had he been given opportunities, looked up sharply from the desk at which he was writing as the millionaire strode in, and came to a halt before him.

"Well, youngster?" he asked, with a sharp glance at Don, after which he knitted his brows, as though puzzled.

"I am Don Darrel—known, as a rule, as the Boy with Fifty Millions," the lad said quietly; and he half-expected to be disbelieved, and find the official impatiently ordering him to quit.

"Don Darrel? Pshaw! I thought your face was somehow familiar!" the station-sergeant cried, banging a clenched fist down upon his desk. "I can see you are Don Darrel now. I remember your face well from the photos that were circulated when you were kidnapped. Well, what's the trouble, young sir—eh?"

"No trouble at all, unless the trouble is for certain enemies of mine, sergeant," Don laughed. "I would like to tell you a short yarn, then take you back with me to a spot near Little Merchester, where one of the worst and most dangerous gangs of crooks of modern times are in hiding."

"Not the bunch run by the woman, Inez Alvarez, the criminals who kidnapped you?" the official cried, his keen eyes blazing for a moment in excitement.

Don Darrel nodded. "Sure," he said. "Do I spout details, sergeant?"

"You bet you do, my lad," McGrath agreed, with an eager nod. "I am all attention."

As Don Darrel finished recounting his experiences of the last few hours, Station-Sergeant McGrath whistled again, and regarded him in unbounded admiration.

"By James! You're a plucked 'un!" he exclaimed, though quietly. "Just wait here a moment, will you? We'll have a ring of men thrown round this pretty little nest of crooks in no time. You don't think"—with sudden doubt—"that the men in the car tumbled to the fact that you were following them in the aeroplane?"

Don Darrel laughed. "Not on your life!" he said. "Remember, they thought I was a giddy corpse—one of the sort guaranteed very dead and really genuine—and that wouldn't dream of anyone else having an aeroplane all ready to nip after them in."

"In that case, they are in for a rude awakening, and that soon!" McGrath said grimly.

He hurried into a room wherein was one of the chief inspectors attached to the station. To this official Don Darrel repeated his story, and he was a trifle impressed by the excitement in police circles he had been able to cause.

It was plain that Inez Alvarez and her followers were looked upon as the most daring band of criminals of the

times, and that their capture would be a feather in the caps of whatever section of the police brought it about.

The county superintendent and the chief-constable of Yarmouth were in turn communicated with. Rather to the disappointment of Don Darrel, who had been hoping he might again meet his friend, Detective-Inspector Lawson, Scotland Yard was not brought into the matter. It was dealt with chiefly by the head-constable of the famous seaside town, though most expeditiously and ably.

Plans were swiftly made. Thirty police-constables and plain-clothes detectives were to take part in the raid; and were to proceed to the wood in the vicinity of the house, disguised as wood-cutters.

In this way it was hoped that suspicion that the crooks' rendezvous was being surrounded might be delayed until the very last moment, and a surprise sprung upon them.

The little rustic police-station at Little Merchester had been phoned for information as to the house near the wood which Don had described and its occupants. Information was gleaned that left little doubt in the minds of Station-Sergeant McGrath and others concerned that it was the gang's latest meeting-place and refuge.

The house—a small mansion—had been empty for some time, and eventually it had been rented some months ago by a white-haired, elderly-looking woman, who called herself "Mrs. Gondolez," and gave out that she had come but recently from Spain.

That she was really the fiendish and daring leader of the band of criminals who had menaced Don Darrel was certain.

The "elderly Spanish lady's" white hair was undoubtedly a white wig, which hid hair of a raven blackness. Her "age" was really "make-up," and "Mrs. Gondolez" but an alias for Inez Alvarez, adventuress, super-thief, and swindler, and agent of mystery and death.

Within an hour of Don's arrival at Yarmouth Police Station all was in readiness to begin the journey to the scene of the intended raid.

The thirty men, in charge of Inspector Trueman, of the local police, marched out of the station in their rough workmen's clothes, and carrying wood-cutters' axes and other tools.

They tumbled into the two lorries which were drawn up outside, and Don Darrel, who had bought an old suit at a second-hand wardrobe-dealer's, and smeared his face and hands with grime, to make himself unrecognisable at a casual glance, was with them.

"Why not stay behind, youngster?" McGrath said, as Don was about to follow him into one of the lorries, though the lad had gained permission from Trueman to accompany them. "There is going to be danger at this house at Little Merchester Woods."

But Don only grinned, as he swung himself up into the cumbersome vehicle.

"If I thought there wasn't, sergeant, I guess I wouldn't want to come," he said. "I am going to see this circus through to the bitter end. To-night, when it's all over, and you've clapped those yahoos into gaol, I mean to stand you a feed!"

"A dinner of celebration?" McGrath asked, smiling.

"Sure, and some dinner at that!" Don Darrel assured him, as he seated himself on the side of the lorry. "Ah, we're off!"

And they were. Their lorry was following the first, which had started to rumble away along the road.

The great adventure was nearing its end for Don Darrel. For the police, it was just beginning.

The London and Liverpool Bank's head branch, in Lombard Street, City, was being discussed by a woman and twelve men. For the "council" ruled by Inez Alvarez had been called together for its periodical conference, and was sitting.

The woman herself, a cigarette between her long, tapering fingers, and her dark eyes thoughtful and dreamy, sat at the head of the table

in the large front reception-room in the house near the wood at Little Merchester. Six on either side of the table, her followers sat listening as she began to speak.

"Then all our plans are complete," she said, ticking off the points she made upon her fingers. "Brownlow will have the plans of the bank's interior drawn by to-morrow. On the next day, our cracksmen, Ford and Carew, will make a careful study of them. On the day after, we shall go to London in readiness to make the haul, and—What was that?"

From the direction of the nearby wood had sounded the ring of axes. Inez Alvarez's chief assistant, Smith,

"Then you got that boy at last," she said, a gleam of malicious satisfaction in her eyes, as she turned towards Smith and the man who sat next him.

"Yes," the fellow answered callously. "Sammy, the Kid, is revenged at last. Don Darrel has paid the penalty, and we got away without leaving a trace behind."

"It shall be likewise with all those who are fools enough to foil us, my comrades," she said; and she indulged in a soft laugh, which was, however, choked off short in her throat.

A thunderous knocking had come upon the front door, and a muffled voice could be heard uttering words that gave the crooks one of the worst surprises of their lives.

"Open—in the name of the law!" was what they were, and they brought the woman and the twelve men to their feet as one, several of their chairs going over with a crash.

"Caramba! We are raided!" broke from the lips of Inez Alvarez, which had suddenly gone white. "Quick—out by the back! We may be able to pass through the garden and escape into the wood!"

A rush was made to follow her advice, though there was scarcely a man among her followers who did not

Crack! A constable went reeling back, clutching at the fleshy part of his arm. But Smith found to his cost that the police were learning sense and arming themselves when on such expeditions as this. Two revolvers held by the pseudo-woodmen were levelled at him, and spoke simultaneously, and, although one bullet missed him by a hair's-breadth, the other passed through his shoulder, and he fell in a huddled heap, groaning.

In the meantime, others of the gang who had made a desperate dash for liberty had been tackled by other members of the raiders, and a terrific fight was in progress.

Knocking up a deadly little automatic pistol Inez Alvarez had produced and directed at him, McGrath, the Yarmouth station-sergeant, had grabbed her, and was fighting to imprison her wrists in handcuffs.

Just as he succeeded in clamping the steel bracelet about her second wrist and snapping it, the other half of the police-party, which had been in the front of the house, came rushing through it and joined in the fray. The fight was of short duration after that. Hopelessly outnumbered, and with three of their number by this time lying helplessly wounded, the criminals were forced to throw up the sponge.

Those who were not already handcuffed had this little courtesy performed for them, and were forced back against the wall of the house at the point of the raiders' weapons.

And it was at that moment that Inez Alvarez raised a tiny grey capsule towards her lips. Only Don Darrel, who had been in the thick of the fight, noticed her action, and, guessing its significance, he leapt forward.

"Stop her! It's poison!" he shouted to McGrath; but, although with a startled cry the station-sergeant struck her fettered hands away from her mouth, he was just the fraction of a second too late.

Until his dying day, Don Darrel will never forget the look of mingled horror and surprise that leapt into the woman's coldly-beautiful face as she heard his voice, stared hard at him, and recognised him. But she had little time to display any sort of emotion now. The action of the deadly pellet she had swallowed was very swift.

A ghastly pallor spread over her face. For just a fleeting moment there was a mocking smile playing about her lips, then she swayed, and would have fallen had not McGrath caught her in his arms.

Inez Alvarez had cheated the law that would have punished her for her many crimes, and died as tragically as she had lived.

Don Darrel's Latest Scheme!

There were scenes of riotous fun and extravagance at one of the big Yarmouth hotels that night when Don Darrel, the Boy with Fifty Millions, was host to the men of the local police-force who had taken part in the raid.

There had been course after course. Such a dinner even the eldest members of the hotel staff could not recall. Don Darrel and Philips, Losely, South, Grierson, and Yukio and Chuta, had been sent for from Don's country seat, where they were staying with him.

After the dinner there had been speech-making, and the time had come when Don, in spite of all his protests, could not help himself rising and addressing the company.

He rose with some dignity, and promptly sat down once more with a terrific bump, as a hand he suspected of belonging to Frank Philips tugged unexpectedly at his coat-tails. But he rose once more as a storm of cheering broke out, and beamed round on the happy-looking policemen and detectives.

"Well, boys," he said, "I'll just say a few words to convince you what an—"

"Ass I am," murmured South. "What an orator I am." Don Darrel said, ignoring the interruption. "I guess I had a leaning towards looking on bobbies as silly yahoos, but, although there are cases where I still think that, they do not exist in Yarmouth, and you all earned my admiration to-day, if it's worth anything to you!"

"It is! It is! We all like you, kid, because you're a plucked 'un, and we want you to like us!" the men shouted, clapping and thumping upon the table. "Hear, hear!"

"I do not think I have much more to say," Don went on, "save this. Those of you who have quite naturally, but erroneously, wondered if my friend on my right"—this was Philips—"is any relation to a sheep

(Continued on page 320.)

SOMETHING QUITE NEW IN THE WAY OF COMPETITIONS!

First Prize - £5.

THREE SPLENDID TUCK HAMPERS. EIGHT PRIZES OF 5s. EACH.

On this page you will find a drawing consisting of six pictures. In drawing each of these pictures the artist has deliberately made mistakes. British boys are credited with having keen powers of observation, and therefore we invite them to say what these mistakes are.

The Editor has a complete list in his possession, and the FIRST PRIZE OF £5 will be sent to the reader whose list corresponds with the official solution. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit.

The way you must proceed is to take a clean sheet of paper, and write down upon it, in ink, the numbers 1 to 6. Then against each number put down as briefly as possible what you consider is wrong with the picture bearing the corresponding number. To assist us in adjudicating, please let your list be as neat as possible. Any showing alterations or erasures will be disqualified. When you have solved the puzzle to your satisfaction, fill in the coupon which is underneath the pictures, cut it out, and pin it to your list, and then post to:

"ERRORS" COMPETITION No. 4, BOYS' FRIEND and "Boys' Herald" Offices, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4,

so as to arrive at that address not later than July 14th.

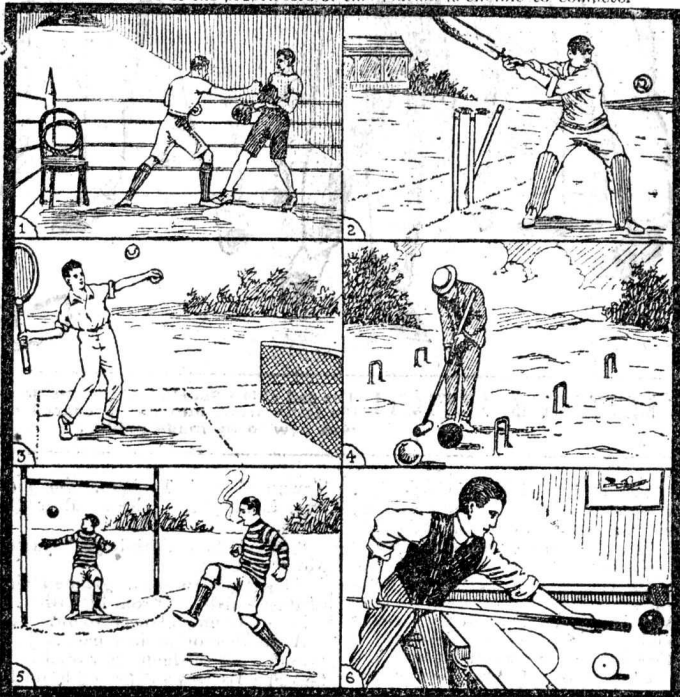
If no one succeeds in sending in a complete list of all the errors, the prize will be awarded to the competitor who comes nearest.

The right to add together and divide any or all of the prizes is reserved.

No correspondence can be entered into, and the Editor's decision must be accepted as final and binding.

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

No employee of the proprietors of this journal is eligible to compete.



I enter "ERRORS" Competition No. 4, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

Address.....

CLOSING DATE OF COMPETITION—JULY 14th, 1921.

rose and went to one of the windows. It was covered by a shutter, but a cunningly-made spyhole had been let into it, and through this he peered.

"Only a party of wood-cutters, senora," he said, coming back to his seat; and it had not occurred to him that the men he had seen had been steadily moving towards the house. "You were saying?"

The woman continued to discuss this latest exploit—a scheme that might, and probably would, have caused the bank in question a colossal loss but for the wit and courage of Don Darrel. Then, from that she turned the conversation to the millionaire himself.

feel that there would be as little chance of escape that way as through the front door, where the police were demanding admittance.

As they poured through the house and flung open the door that led into the garden, they found this only too true. They were confronted by some fifteen men who looked like workmen, but whom they knew now were disguised police and detectives. The house was surrounded. They were caught like rats in a trap!

His face a dirty grey with fear, for he believed that for him capture would mean the rope. Smith dragged a revolver from his pocket, and, snarling, he swung it upwards.



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."

BEATING ALL RECORDS.

I think all my chums will agree that Mr. Jessop has now really "got things moving" in his grand sporting story. In next Monday's instalment Jack Cresley lands on Australian soil, and gets his first experience of that wonderful country. Incidentally, I can promise my chums a really thrilling boxing incident, described in such a masterly manner as to leave no doubt in the mind of anyone that Mr. Jessop is as good a hand with the pen as he is with the cricket-bat. It is an inspiring thought, is it not, that every line of this wonderful new story was penned by the man who wrought such mighty deeds against the Australians in Test cricket a year or two back!

"FIGHTING JACK CRESLEY!"

By Gilbert L. Jessop, is creating a new record for popularity, and in all the array of wonderful stories we have had in the old "Green 'Un" in the past, none stands higher, in my opinion than this latest wonderful yarn.

AUSTRALIAN READERS, PLEASE NOTE!

My many Australian readers will be particularly interested in G. L. Jessop's great story, as the scene of action is laid principally in Australia, with which country the author is thoroughly familiar. I am anticipating a considerable influx of new readers as soon as the news of this wonderful yarn gets around "down under."

ANOTHER GREAT NEW FEATURE!

Now, in addition to a fine long instalment of "Fighting Jack Cresley!" I have another first-class item up my sleeve for next Monday, and that is Victor Nelson's latest Masterpiece,

"THE QUICK-CHANGE MILLIONAIRE!"

—another splendid tale of fabulously wealthy Don Darrel, with Chuta, his Indian servant, and his dog Snap.

The breezy simplicity of the school-boy millionaire has already won all hearts, and in this latest story he pursues his policy of "looking for trouble" in a fresh direction, with results which form most exciting and interesting reading.

"THE QUICK-CHANGE MILLIONAIRE!"

is far and away the best Don Darrel story Victor Nelson has yet written, and my chums can look forward to it with perfect confidence.

There are numerous other splendid features in next week's "B.F.," naturally, but I have not space to do more than mention the most prominent, viz., the long, complete Rookwood and Backwoods stories, the special articles on Cricket, Swimming, and Business, the long instalment of Duncan Storm's popular "Jim Handyman" story, and a splendid one-week competition, offering £10 in prizes.

This programme is one that it would be hard to improve upon, yet I have set myself that task, and—let me whisper it—I have still another surprise to spring upon you in the very near future! I have secured a really wonderful series of complete stories from the pen of your old favourite, Cecil Hayter. This prince of storytellers has been absent all too long from our pages; but he is "coming back" with a series of stories which will, to say the least of it, cause a sensation. I will tell you more about this important matter next week.

IN THE "BOYS' HERALD."

I should like to draw my chums' attention to the fine programme offered in to-morrow's greatly enlarged issue of our splendid companion-paper, the "Boys' Herald." Your other special favourite, Owen Conquest, contributes a special, long, complete school story, entitled "Jack Drake, Detective"; Stringer, Walter Edwards' famous character, disports himself through the length of another splendid complete story; while in "Don't Go to London, Lad!" and "The Lad from the Lower Deck," our companion paper has two of the finest serials of this kind ever published.

A NEW LIFE FOR PHOTOS.

I am awarding a cash prize of 5s. to the sender, E. C. Higgs, 25, Kenninghall Road, Clapton Park, E. 5.

Many of us are really sorry when a favourite photograph of ours begins to fade, and even the best of them are liable to do so in course of time. Now, a splendid hint for reviving photographs that are beginning to fade is to dip a cloth in methylated spirit, and rub the picture with this. You will be surprised at the difference, and the fine glossy surface that is left. The spirit helps to preserve the photograph.

A CAPITAL SWING.

There is always a youngster who is charmed to have a swing. I am awarding a prize of five shillings to



GILBERT L. JESSOP.

the sender of the following—Stanley Ross, 80, Powis Place, Aberdeen:

First get a board, twelve inches by twelve, and bore holes in each corner. Next pass a piece of cord, 5ft. long, through each hole. Then procure twelve cotton reels, and place three on each cord. Next put on four pieces of wood, 12 by 1 1/2, on top of reels. After you have done that, make a knot on each piece of cord just above the pieces of wood, and secure the cords to hooks fixed in the top of a doorway.

Correspondence.

If L. Thory, of Anfield, Liverpool, will forward his full address, a personal letter from Mr. Percy Longhurst will be sent to him.

Your Editor.

DANGER AHEAD!

(Continued from page 317.)

"Of all the silly duffers—" jeered Gower.

"Of all the suspicious cads—" said Topham.

Lattrey staggered to his feet. "I—I can't understand it!" he stammered. "I—I was sure—in fact, I'm still sure—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Jimmy Silver scornfully. "There's the contradiction in your father's own fist. You'd better shut up."

"But I—I—" "He said Lurchey had been squared!" grinned Gower. "Has your father been squared too, Lattrey?" "Ha, ha, ha!"

Lattrey turned away, almost choking with rage. Gower's mocking suggestion made him start. But certainly it was not possible for Lattrey to take up the attitude that his own father had been bribed to tell falsehoods. His game was up. Montmorency was safe from him now. And Lattrey strode away with a black brow, and rage and disappointment running riot in his breast.

The letter was passed from hand to hand. In an hour's time every fellow in the Fourth had seen it. Montmorency walked the quadrangle with Townsend and Topham, his head held very high, his noble nose turned up higher than usual. As Mornington put it humorously, he had left the court without a stain on his character, though it was noticeable that Morny himself did not speak to Cecil Cuthbert, whose bona fides had been so thoroughly proved.

It was an hour later that Montmorency sauntered into his study, with a calm and smiling face. The doubts and misgivings that had weighed on the pretender were gone now. For the first time Cecil Cuthbert felt quite at ease and full of confidence. It was natural, considering the nature of Cecil Cuthbert, that in such a mood he should be more snobbish than ever. He found Tubby Muffin in his study, and the glance of contempt he gave him would have penetrated the shell of an oyster.

But it did not seem to worry Reginald Muffin. The fat Classical gave Montmorency a cheery nod and grin.

"All serene now, old top—what?" he asked.

"Get out of my study!"

"My dear old bean—"

"I'd rather not kick you out," said Montmorency. "It would soil my boot. But if you don't walk out—"

He made a stride towards the fat junior. Tubby dodged round the table.

"Hold on, Monty!" he said coolly across the table. "Just a word—one little word! I was in the prefects' room the other day when you phoned home—"

Montmorency stopped dead. "I was there—behind the big arm-chair," said Tubby cheerily. "Heard every word, old chap. I knew that Lattrey's father wouldn't play up. I knew he'd been got at. But would I give you away? Not for worlds, old chap, since we're so friendly!"

Montmorency's look was not exactly friendly. If looks could have killed, Reginald Muffin's fat career would have been cut suddenly short there and then. But looks couldn't; and Tubby rattled on cheerily: "Rely on me, old fellow! I'll stand by you—so long as you're really pally, of course."

Montmorency breathed hard, almost gasping. Once more he had succeeded in stifling the truth, and once more his success had turned to bitter ashes in his mouth. He could not speak, he only stared blankly at Tubby Muffin, as if fascinated by Tubby's fat, grinning face.

Tubby winked.

"Dear old bean!" he said. "That's right; take it calm, and rely on an old pal to see you through. By the way, Monty—Tubby's manner grew very friendly and confidential—by the way, I'm rather short of tin. Could you lend an old pal a pound-note?"

In silence—the silence of dismay, almost of despair—the upstart of Rookwood fumbled in his pocket. Tubby Muffin rolled out of the study with a fat grin of satisfaction on his face and a pound-note in his fat paw. He left dismay and desolation behind him.

THE END.

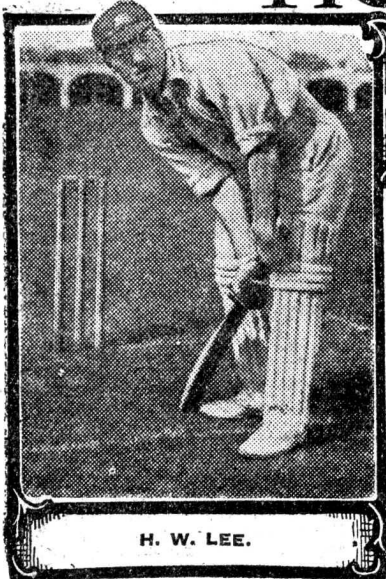
"Chumming With Monty!" is the title of the long, complete Rookwood School story in next Monday's Boys' FRIEND. There also appears each Friday a fine tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. in the "Popular." Get a copy of next week's issue!

ANSWERS EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2!

EXCLUSIVE TO THE "BOYS' FRIEND!"

HOW TO PLAY CRICKET

by LEE of Middlesex



H. W. LEE.

CAN CRICKETERS BE SELF-MADE?

Test-match cricketer. On the other hand, I should class Patsy Hendren as the manufactured article, because he has only reached his present high level by diligent practice and exemplary patience. As a beginner, he was quite crude, and altogether different from J. W. Hearne, who, from the moment he swung a bat, one could tell it was born in him, which, after all, is quite feasible when one remembers what an illustrious name the various Hearnes have made in cricket history.

But I do not want my young friend or other readers to think that anyone can really excel at the game. At some games, practise as I will, I shall ever be a duffer, as my colleagues will tell you. It is certain that you must have natural ability, above anything else, if you are going to make good as a crack player; but the good old game is a sport for all, no matter of what ability.

Natural ability does not necessarily mean "born aptitude." Physique and the perfect response of muscle to the mind (the latter can be developed in practice) is what I want you to understand by that term. The born player, you will often find, is by no means robust, and if he had to depend on

physique would be in a very poor way indeed. I could name quite a number of great cricketers who, unfortunately, do not enjoy the best of health. G. Gunn, for instance, who is obliged to winter out of England to keep himself fit enough to earn his living by the game in the summer. Yet what a great player he is, and has been. Here again is a member of a great cricketing family who has eye, brain, and muscle so perfectly attuned that he can score by craft, whereas others would have to use force.

It is in this way that the born player excels. It may seem funny to say it, but he makes the bowler score his runs for him. Off a slow bowler his chances of scoring quickly are almost nil; but let a fast medium bowler appear on the scene, then our born player will leg-gance and cut to such purpose that the ball simply flies to the boundary. Not because the ball has been hit hard, but merely well timed, which is perfection in batting.

Timing may be a little difficult to describe, but if I say you know when you have hit the ball well and truly by the way the ball leaves the bat, and you have scarcely used any effort in doing so, I will be writing something you will all understand. The great secret is to make as much out of the

pace of the ball with a minimum of effort. A swing of the bat from shoulder-high, brought down to meet an average-paced ball at the moment when you have the full value of swing, plus weight added to the natural resiliency of the ball when meeting with resistance which is much or little, according to the pace of it, is sufficient to send it to the boundary—that is, if it misses a fieldman, who sometimes gets in the way.

To revert to my opening question. I unhesitatingly say that, given the attributes I speak of, there is no reason why one should not develop into a good player. My correspondent asks me if I am a "made" player. Well, yes, I am, if I am anything. I certainly do know that I took a little longer than most county players to do anything worth writing home about. At one time I almost despaired of being successful; but it came in time. But, as the Scotsman remarked about his change—only just.

Here is a little tip which is well worth following. If you belong to a club which is fortunate enough to possess a pavilion, don't keep inside out of the light if you are next in to bat. Coming out from a comparatively dark room into the sunlight is not the best way to get your eye in—in fact, it is one of the best ways of getting out. Get accustomed to the light you are going to bat in.

If, too, one can have a knock before going in, so much the better. You can't sit in an office all the week, pick up a bat, and expect to hit the cover off the ball. Unless you are a confirmed optimist, you may or may not do well, but your chances will be much improved if you do as I suggest.

Again, I want to call attention to the importance of running between wickets, and especially on a soft one. Please do keep off the pitch, and especially off that part where the bowler pitches the ball. Not only are

you making a spot for the bowler, but you are creating a spot which may cause a ball to rear up to do you a nasty injury. A few cases have come to my notice recently where such circumstances have happened. If these things occur on our perfect pitches, how on earth are you going to fare on your less perfect ones?

Then about calling. I have already told you that the striker should call when the ball has been batted forward, or in full view of the striker. When the ball has been played, and goes behind the striker's wicket, his partner should call, and, in passing, as he still has the ball in view, should inform his partner of the possibility of another run or not. A man should not have to run down the pitch looking over his shoulder to learn such chances; for one thing, he cannot run so fast, nor can he run so sure. By that I mean, checking his pace so as to ground his bat and turn quickly for another run. He should trust the judgment of his colleague, and act accordingly. It is so simple to say "Two," or "Another," when passing, and it never leaves one in doubt.

I must tell you this little story. Most of you know that I have a very pronounced crouch at the wicket. After one of the innings in which I was playing against our visitors recently, the usual crowd of youngsters came after us for our signatures. Said one to his chum:

"I wonder what makes him bend down like he does?"

"Don't you know? Why, he had the wind-up. You see, them fast bowlers can't knock his head off when he tucks it between his legs!"

Handwritten signature of H. W. Lee.

Handwritten signature of Middlesex.

(Another exclusive article by this famous cricketer in next Monday's Boys' FRIEND.)

"THE SCHOOLBOY MULTI-MILLIONAIRE."

(Continued from page 318.)

must try to forget the impression. I understand that his face was like that even in early childhood, and it is his misfortune and not his fault. I guess—

"If I had a mug like yours—" Philips began indignantly.

"Of course, he would wish that, but it is merely forgivable jealousy," Don cut in. "That concludes my performance for this evening, gentlemen, and I thank you, one and all, for your kind attention to my—"

"Stupid remarks!" Philips prompted, as he paused.

"To my words of wisdom," Don corrected, sitting down.

Sergeant McGrath leapt to his feet, a glass of sparkling wine in his hand.

"Here's to our host, boys!" he cried. "I'd like to let him know what we think of the cute way in which he tricked those crooks and ran them down. It's our opinion to a man that, if there were more people with his abilities as a detective, there would be less criminals at large!"

Don Darrel uttered a shout, and came to his feet again with an alacrity that caused him to slop some half of the contents of a glass of ginger-pop down Chuta's neck.

"Say, do you think I should make a good detective, boys?" he asked eagerly, waving the glass of "pop" about in his excitement and spilling more of it upon Philips.

There were cries of assent from all round the long table.

"Then, my hat, you chaps, I'll do it!" the millionaire declared, addressing his chums.

"Do what? Turn detective?" Losely gasped, staring at him.

"Yes!" Don vowed. "At the first opportunity! It will help pass the rest of our holidays, and if we don't get some fun and excitement out of the stunt, then my name is not Don Darrel!"

To work as a private detective! The idea appealed to him—quicken his pulses, and—well, he had made up his mind. Any ambition was possible to achieve with a capital as large as his.

He little dreamed then, however, how soon he would be really and earnestly at work in his new and self-sought role, or of the great wrong he was destined to right for a very dear friend.

Neither did he foresee quite how much screaming fun a millionaire detective could get out of his cases!

THE END.

(Make sure of your copy of next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND. It contains the opening chapters of the biggest adventure story ever written—"THE QUICK-CHANGE MILLIONAIRE!" By Victor Nelson.)

THE TWO MOST-TALKED-OF MEN TO-DAY!



M. GEORGES CARPENTIER and



JACK DEMPSEY.

SWIMMING!

Some Helpful Tips About This Popular Summer Pastime by PERCY LONGHURST, Health Editor of THE BOYS' FRIEND.

Training for a Swimming Race.

Give yourself plenty of time. That's the first and the most important piece of advice. Making up your mind "to do a bit of training" a week before the date of the race for which you've entered won't do you any good at all. In all probability more harm than good will result, for you'll be tempted to crowd into a few days the work of weeks. In which case you can't well be disappointed if, when the race comes off, you don't swim up to your expectations.

Not less than a month is the time you ought to allow yourself; and don't go into the work with the notion that you need to train down fine, as does the boxer or runner. Just the reverse. So, if you make any alteration in your food, don't cut out the butter, milk, cocoa, potatoes, etc., that the boxer in training has to learn to do without.

The swimmer needs fat. It keeps him warm in the water and prevents loss of energy and vitality. But do chew all your food very carefully. Do that, and it doesn't really matter what you eat, although a deal of sweets, pastry, and drink of any kind is not to be recommended.

Have plenty of sleep, and don't smoke.

Don't go into the water every day; three or four times a week is quite enough; and, above all things, don't stay in too long, or devote all your time to increasing speed. That means haste, which spells neglect of form, and this ruins the swimmer's chances.

For the first week, don't travel more than 100yds., and take plenty

until the arms are ready for their stroke.

Keep the legs quite still until the arms recover, then they begin their movement. To attempt to kick until the arms have taken a full stroke is a big mistake, one that means loss of time before the limbs can settle down for their properly combined strokes.

It is well at the turn to take a full breath. Turn the head, and fill the lungs just before the hands come back for the stroke that brings the body into position for the shove-off.

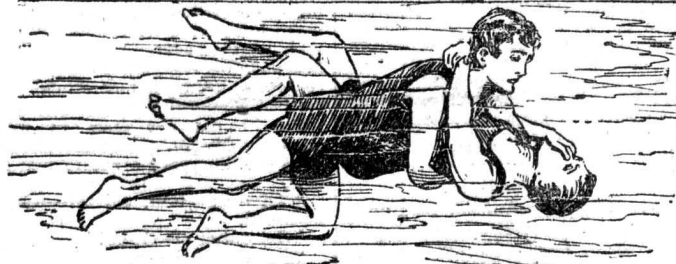
Tips for the Life-Saver.

Some time or other it may fall to one or more of my readers to be instrumental in saving a person from drowning, and it is well to know what to do if, as is likely, the person you're trying to save loses his head, and does things that endanger your own life as well as his own.

Drowning men will clutch at straws, says the old proverb. Yes, and any part of their would-be rescuers that they can get a grip of. And, by Jove, but they will grip tightly.

Suppose you are thus clutched by the wrists. Turn both your arms outwards, together, and against the person's thumbs, bringing your arms to a right-angle with the body. If he doesn't leave go his thumbs will be dislocated. But better than that he should drown himself and you, too.

He may seize you around the neck—a favourite hold. First take a deep breath, then lean well over him, and shove one hand in the small of his back. Put your other hand over his face and palm on his chin, thumb and



A Life-Saving Tip.

of time over it. During the second week, increase the distance, but still avoid any sprinting. Give your attention to perfecting the stroke you swim, and that can only be done slowly.

At the beginning of the third week the daily distance may be lengthened to 250yds., to increase by 100yds. at the end of the week, with a couple of days between given to sprinting. If your race is, say, about 200yds., on the distance days swim 200yds., and on the sprinting days go no more than 50yds. to 80yds.

If you can get a chum to time you, whether you're swimming fast or slow, it will be a big help to you.

Spend a few minutes practising turning every week. It pays.

Turning.

Time, of course, is lost in making the turn when the end of the bath is reached; the great thing is to cut down that loss of time as much as possible. In a two-lengths race the loss is too little to be worth troubling much about, though even then it often means the difference between winning and losing. A chap good at turning will gain almost a second on the turn over one that is bad. This tots up to something considerable in an ordinary bath in a race of several lengths.

The end of the bath should be reached with the turning arm straight forward, and to get this, take either two long or three short strokes as the wall is neared. Place the hand sideways on the wall, above the water-line, palm flat, fingers pointing in the direction in which the turn is to be made. Now swing the body round, helping with the other arm, so that the soles of both feet meet the wall a few inches below the surface.

Now for the shoot forward. Bring both hands quickly to the hips, fingers down, palms forward, giving a back-stroke which brings the hips almost up against the wall. Then strike out with the arm, and at the same moment straighten out the legs with a vigorous spring. With this shove-off the body will travel well

forefinger pinching his nose. Then shove—the harder the better.

It's quite possible he will get you round the body, or, what is worse, round the body and arms, too, holding you helpless. Don't attempt to struggle. Take a full breath, try to get hold of his nose as described above, and bring your knee up sharply into the lower part of his chest. You may be able to get the other hand on his shoulder; anyway, stretch out the arms and legs, throwing the whole weight of your body backward. This will break the most desperate clutch, and leave you free to slip your hands under his armpits, and thence to his chest. Raise his arms, and swim with the breast-stroke, pushing him in front of you.

£10

IN PRIZES FOR YOU!

Turn to Page 318.

Choosing a Career!



No. 15.—HOW TO BECOME A CIVIL OR MINING ENGINEER.

The profession of a civil engineer is, of course, quite distinct from that of a mining engineer. But as the training for both callings is much the same, at all events in its initial stages, I have thought it best to deal with them in the same article.

As regards the first mentioned, then, the term "civil," as applied to engineering, means an engineer who is engaged upon some kind of constructional work.

Exactly what this work consists in will depend upon circumstances, for the civil engineer must be qualified to cope with all and any kind of constructive engineering; such as, for example, railway, harbour, or dock building and planning, main drainage, road-making, the construction and equipping of waterworks, and many other jobs of a like character.

The training necessary to qualify for the successful carrying out of undertakings of this sort is necessarily arduous, and more or less expensive. On the other hand, however, there are a number of special scholarships and prizes open to engineering students, the winning of which by a clever and painstaking lad will materially reduce the cost of his professional education.

But in order to do this he must first have attained to a fairly high standard of school education, embracing especially such subjects as mathematics—including geometry and trigonometry—history, and geography. This is necessary to enable him to pass the preliminary examination which is required of all lads who aspire to membership of the Institute of Civil Engineers.

Having successfully negotiated this, two courses are open to him. He may become a "premium pupil," as it is termed, in the offices of some recognised firm of civil engineers; or he may qualify as a non-premium engineer apprentice.

In either case there is plenty of hard work in front of him before he can expect to pass his qualifying, or, as it is called, Associate Membership examination. The final test of fitness for his job embraces such highly technical subjects as geodesy, electro-chemistry, strength and elasticity of materials, and other branches of engineering science, plus one modern foreign language, the choice of this latter being left to the candidate.

It will probably take him from four to six years before he is able to pass his "final," and, while in exceptional cases training can be obtained free, usually the cost runs from about £40 to £200, or even more. Assuming, however, that a lad enters the profession as a non-premium apprentice, he will not have to support himself entirely during the whole of his apprenticeship.

Wages are usually paid after the first year, and as he progresses in skill and knowledge he will find that it is frequently possible to add to his income by doing odd jobs in his spare time. Meanwhile, he will, of course, take every opportunity of attending the engineering classes held in connection with the various polytechnics and technical colleges. The fees for this kind of tuition are, as a rule, quite moderate.

Young men who contemplate becoming civil or mining engineers, however, should first of all write for full particulars of courses, examina-

tions, etc., to the Secretary of the Institute of Civil Engineers, Great George Street, Westminster. In return they will receive, free of charge, certain papers and pamphlets, which will enable them to form an excellent idea of the scope and character of the training they will have to undergo.

And in this connection it may be mentioned that fees are payable to the institute authorities for the preliminary examination; and five guineas for the final, making seven guineas in all. The payment of these sums is obligatory in advance, and fees are not returnable in the event of a candidate failing to present himself for the examination; nor, of course, in the event of his failing to pass. It follows, therefore, that the candidate should try to make sure that he stands a reasonable chance of success before entering his name, and, incidentally, parting with his money.

After passing his final, the young beginner will be well advised to look out for some junior post in a firm of civil engineers, or in the engineering department of a railway. Many big firms of contractors are also on the look out frequently for young, pushing men, who will agree to work for a comparatively small salary to begin with in consideration of the experience to be gained.

In no case, however, should a qualified engineer, no matter how youthful, be asked or expected to accept a salary of less than £200 a year, while £300 would be nearer the average. And this in the beginning only! In the course of a few years he should have gained sufficient experience to enable him to apply with confidence for a post as resident engineer, carrying with it a salary varying from £600 up to £1,200 per annum.

The training and qualifications for a mining engineer are much the same, speaking generally, as those set forth in the case of a civil engineer. The preliminary examinations in each instance are practically identical; and as regards the final qualifying examination, the only difference is that certain subjects, such as, for instance, geology, metallurgy, and hydraulics, which are more or less optional in the case of the civil engineer, are compulsory for the mining engineer.

Like the work of the civil engineer, too, that pertaining to the mining engineer embraces a number of more or less clearly defined subdivisions. There is, for example, colliery engineering, in which branch there are many openings at home for qualified men; metalliferous-mining engineering, in which branch there are jobs to be had in South Africa, Australia, Canada, and other parts of the Empire; and oil-mining engineering, one of the great coming industries, whose possibilities no man can foresee or attempt to estimate.

All these, and many others, afford scope for the abilities of a properly qualified man.

(The Editor of the BOYS' FRIEND will be pleased to give further advice on this subject to readers requiring it. All queries should be as definite as possible. Letters should be addressed to "The Editor, the BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, London, E.C. 4." and the envelope marked "Civil Engineering" in the top left-hand corner. A stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed with all queries.)

RESULT OF PICTURE COMPETITION No. 2.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution of the pictures, and the FIRST PRIZE of £5 has been awarded to:

Miss F. Tarbottom, 37, Lyndhurst Street, Leeds Road, Bradford.

The value of the Three Tuck Hampers (£3), and the Eight Prizes of 5s. each, have been added together and divided among the following seventeen competitors, who each sent in a solution containing one error:

S. J. Evans, 44, Regent Street, Gloucester; Chas. Hollis, 37, Reservoir Terrace, Chesterfield; Miss S. A. Scott, 6, Industry Street, Walsden, Yorks; Harry Wilson, jun., 108, Ryan Street, Bradford; James P. Dryden, 47, Bristo Street, Edinburgh; Mary Keddie, 44, Peddie Street, Dundee; George H. Preston, 12, Arbour Road,

Leicester; W. Fraser, 48, Barrack Street, Dundee; S. B. Netherway, 62, St. Paul's Road, Clifton, Bristol; Sydney Abbott, West View, Earl's Barton, Northampton; Leonard Stagg, 95, Lansdowne Road, E. 16; George Young, 52, Kempeck Street, Gourock; Harold F. Innocent, 5, Kilgraston Road, Edinburgh; George H. Wilkie, 8, St. Stephen's Terrace, Bradford; R. G. Bullock, 23, Barrack Hill, Newport, Mon.; Beatrice Tarbottom, 37, Lyndhurst Street, Leeds Road, Bradford; Wilfred Tarbottom, 37, Lyndhurst Street, Leeds Road, Bradford.

The Correct Solution is as follows:
1. Falmouth. 2. Stairfoot. 3. Harrogate. 4. Sandwich. 5. Long-sight. 6. Sandycove.

A LONG COMPLETE TALE OF THE CHUMS OF CEDAR CREEK SCHOOL!

BACK TO CEDAR CREEK

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD

**The 1st Chapter.****The Home Trail!**

"But—" said Frank Richards doubtfully.

"You've got to come."

"But—"

"Bother your buts!" said Bob Lawless cheerily. "You've got to come home, old scout, and we've come to take you."

"Yes, rather!" said Vere Beauclerc, with a smile. "We're not going without you, Frank."

"But—"

"We're two to one, I guess," grinned Bob Lawless. "If you don't come, Frank, we shall rope you up like a steer, and lead you home at the end of a trail-rope!"

Frank Richards laughed.

He was glad—more glad than he could have expressed—to see his old chums again.

His wanderings, since he had turned his back on the Lawless Ranch and Cedar Creek School, had lasted only a few weeks, but it seemed almost like years to him since he had seen his chums.

It had been the happiest moment of his life when Bob and Beauclerc had ridden up in the street at Albert Station and joined him.

Now the chums were arguing it out.

Bob and Beauclerc had come to fetch Frank Richards home; but Frank was still dubious.

The shadow on his name at Cedar Creek School had not been lifted, and he had resolved never to return to the Thompson Valley until he was able to look his old friends in the face without a stain of suspicion upon him.

Seated on a grassy bank near the railroad track, the three friends were arguing the point, and Bob and Beauclerc had an unseen ally in Frank's own heart. He was very anxious to return home, to see his old friends again, to take up his old place at Cedar Creek School. But he had left Cedar Creek under the suspicion of having robbed Miss Meadows, and that was a bar against his return. Until the real thief was discovered there was a cloud on his name.

"But your father, Bob!" urged Frank. "You see—"

"Popper believes in you now," said Bob.

"But—"

"Beau's uncle is staying at the ranch now," explained Bob. "He's brought popper round. Lord St. Austells is a real brick—the genuine white article."

"The real goods!" said Beauclerc, smiling.

"He's told popper of the little stunt he played on you," continued Bob Lawless. "He left a lot of money in your hands, to put you to the test, Frank, and you came out as right as rain. That's evidence good enough for any galoot with any hoss-sense."

"Yes; but—but it doesn't alter the fact that Miss Meadows was robbed at Cedar Creek, and that I was suspected," said Frank.

"I guess I haven't told you all the yarn yet," said Bob Lawless. "While you've been cavorting around in the merry North-West, there's been some happenings at Cedar Creek. Since you left there's been two more robberies."

"Oh!" ejaculated Frank.

"Mr. Slimmey has had a fifty-dollar note bagged from his cabin, and Mr. Shepherd has lost twenty dollars," said Bob. "There's no trace of the rascal that pinched the

goods; but nobody could reckon it was you, Frank, when you were a hundred miles or more away. And most of the fellows have figured it out that if there's a thief in the school—as there certainly is—it was most likely the same galoot that pinched Miss Meadows' dust in the first place, and put it on to you."

Frank Richards' face brightened. "By Jove, that alters the case!" he exclaimed.

"Popper was beginning to reckon that he's made a mistake, like Miss Meadows and the rest," said Bob. "In fact, it was getting pretty clear. Then Lord St. Austell stepped in, and told us how you'd rescued him from the rustlers in the Cascade Mountains, and how he'd trusted you with a heap of dollars, that you'd sent back to him safe and sound. After that, only a silly jay could have doubted you, and popper isn't a jay."

"No; but—"

"There you go, butting again!" exclaimed Bob. "Don't I keep on telling you it's all right? Popper wants you to come back—and mopper, too. She never really believed it against you, any more than I did, or the Cherub here. Popper's anxious to see you and beg your pardon."

"Oh!"

"Miss Meadows is willing to give you the benefit of the doubt," said Beauclerc. "She's told us that her opinion has altered very much since the new thefts in the school. She said that she hopes you may be cleared."

"Coming, Franky!"

Frank Richards made up his mind. There was a rift in the clouds, at least; and, although he was not cleared, the way was open for his return; and, once at Cedar Creek again, he would have a chance to fight to clear his name.

He nodded at last.

"I'm coming!" he said.

"Hurrah!"

"You won't regret it, Frank," said Beauclerc. "I'm sure it will turn out all right."

"I—I hope so," said Frank. "If it doesn't, I can hit the trail again, that's all."

"If it comes to that, I guess we'll jolly well come with you," said Bob Lawless. "But it won't! The galoot who's pinching the dust at Cedar Creek will break out again, I reckon, and sooner or later we'll put a cinch on him. Now, then, saddle up!"

And a little later, Frank Richards, with a very cheerful face, was riding on the home-trail with his old chums.

The 2nd Chapter.**At Cedar Creek Again!**

"Frank Richards!"

"By gum!"

"Richards is back again!"

"Hallo, Franky!" roared Chunky Todgers.

"Velly glad see ole Flanky!" chuckled little Yen Chin, the Chinese. "Nicey ole Flanky!"

It was a few days later, and Frank Richards—home again at his uncle's ranch—was returning to school for the first time.

He rode up the old familiar trail through the timber with Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc, and arrived at the gates of Cedar Creek.

His face was a little flushed, and his heart was beating fast, as he rode up to the backwoods school in the sunny summer morning.

Exactly what his reception would

be like he hardly knew. But he knew that he was glad to be back.

Unless the truth came to light, and his name was cleared, he would have some difficulties to face, some humiliations to endure; but at least he would have his two tried and trusty chums to stand by him, and the hope in his breast that he would be righted at last.

At the ranch, all was well with him; his uncle, Rancher Lawless, had asked his pardon frankly for having doubted him. The late happenings at Cedar Creek had quite changed the rancher's opinion, added to what Lord St. Austells had told him. At the ranch, Frank had taken up his old place in the old atmosphere of friendly confidence. It remained to be seen what place he would take at Cedar Creek.

you weren't! I say, can you lend a chap ten dollars for a few days?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We all believe in you, Frank," said Molly Lawrence. "I never doubted you, for one."

"Thank you, Molly," said Frank softly.

"Same here," said Tom Lawrence. "I reckoned that there was some mistake somewhere. And then the fresh robberies happened—why, then I said to Molly that it was the same galoot all along. Didn't I, Molly?"

"I said it to you, you mean," said Molly, laughing.

"Well, it comes to the same thing; we both said it," said Lawrence. "I guess I'm real glad to see you back, Richards!"

"Same 'ere," said Harold Hopkins. "I guess so," said Dick Dawson.

"All friends here, Franky."

"Mind your pockets!" called out Eben Hacke.

Frank Richards flushed crimson. Hacke's was the only disagreeable voice in the crowd; but the taunt struck the returned wanderer hard.

"Shut up, Hacke!" roared Bob Lawless savagely.

"I guess—"

"Go and guess somewhere else, then, you rotter!" exclaimed Bob, and he made a rush at Eben Hacke.

That youth went sprawling along the ground as the rancher's son hit out, and he rolled over, roaring.

"Well hit!" grinned Beauclerc.

"Hold on, Bob!" exclaimed Frank Richards, as Bob Lawless swung up his trail-rope over the sprawling Hacke.

"I guess I'm going to give him ginger!" exclaimed Bob savagely.

Frank caught his Canadian cousin's arm.

"Hold on! Let him alone!"

"I guess I'll smash you!" roared Hacke. "I guess—"

He scrambled up, and rushed at Bob. The rancher's son dropped the trail-rope, and put up his hands. In a minute or less Eben Hacke was on his back again, and this time he was not in a hurry to rise.

The Cedar Creek fellows gathered

"Then—then you don't believe any longer—"

"I hardly know what to believe, Richards. The fact remains that a hundred and ten dollars were taken from my desk at or near the time when you were in this room, and that the ten-dollar bill was discovered in your pocket. That fact remains."

"But—" stammered Frank.

"But since then other things have happened," said Miss Meadows. "Twice a robbery has been perpetrated here since you left. It is only natural to suppose that all three robberies were perpetrated by the same person, and that, in the first instance he succeeded in saving himself from suspicion by placing the smaller stolen bill in your pocket. I will say frankly, Richards, that I do not feel certain of this; but I think it is very probably the case, more especially as you had always borne a spotless character until that time. It is my duty to give you the benefit of the doubt, and to allow you to return to Cedar Creek."

Frank bit his lip.

"I—I suppose that is all I can expect from you, Miss Meadows," he said, in a low voice. "But—but I do not want to return to Cedar Creek on those terms."

"That is for your uncle to decide," said Miss Meadows, rather curtly.

Frank Richards shook his head.

"Not wholly, Miss Meadows," he answered. "My uncle believes in me now, and he is sorry for having doubted me. He is assured that there is only one thief in Cedar Creek—the fellow who has committed thefts since I left. He would not want me to come back here against my will."

"Then—" said Miss Meadows.

"But I want to come," said Frank, "because I think I may be able to find out the guilty party. If I do not succeed in that, I shall not remain at Cedar Creek. I cannot stay here with a stain on my name. But I hope that I shall be successful."

Miss Meadows nodded.

"You have my best wishes for your success, Richards," she said kindly.

"I only hope it may turn out as you



BROUGHT TO BAY! While Bob Lawless held on to the young Chink's pigtail, Mr. Slimmey searched the suspect's clothes. With an exclamation he drew a hundred dollar bill from Yen Chin's pocket. Frank Richards' innocence was now clearly proved!

Frank's return to the ranch was known at the school; and when the three chums arrived at Cedar Creek that morning, a crowd gathered round the gates to meet them.

Upon the whole, the greeting was very friendly and cordial.

Chunky Todgers grasped Frank's hand with a fat paw, and worked at it as if it were a pump-handle.

"Jolly glad to see you, old scout!" said Todgers. "Of course, I never believed anything against you—hardly, anyhow. Of course, it looked bad. I say, I hear you've been at the diggins."

"Yes," said Frank, with a smile.

"Had any luck?"

"Yes."

"Brought any dust home?" asked Chunky, with wide-open, eager eyes.

"Three hundred dollars."

"Jerusalem! I—I say, Franky, I swore all along that you were innocent!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers. "I'd punch any galoot's nose that said

round in a crowd, looking on with grinning face as Hacke received that rapid and thorough licking. It was evident that their sympathies were with Frank Richards.

While Hacke was bathing a seriously-damaged nose in the creek, Frank Richards & Co. walked into the playground, in the midst of a crowd. Mr. Slimmey and Mr. Shepherd were in the playground, and they both came up and shook hands with Frank Richards.

Then Frank went into the lumber school-house to report his arrival to Miss Meadows.

He found the Canadian school-mistress in her little sitting-room, and she bade him enter in a kind voice.

Frank stood before her with a flushed face.

"I—I've come back, Miss Meadows!" he stammered.

Miss Meadows held out her hand.

"I am very glad to see you, Richards," she said kindly.

wish. In the meantime, you will take your place in the class as if nothing had happened."

"Very well, Miss Meadows."

And when the bell rang for school, Frank Richards took his old place in Miss Meadows' class; and he found friendly faces all round him—perhaps one exception. But Eben Hacke was too busy rubbing a swollen nose to pay much attention to Frank Richards.

The 3rd Chapter.**Light at Last!**

"Nicey ole Flanky!"

Frank Richards smiled. It was the second day after his return to Cedar Creek School, and he was strolling in the playground after morning lessons when Yen Chin came sidling up, with his perpetual grin.

The little heathen had been one of the most cordial in welcoming the

(Continued overleaf.)

returned wanderer; but Frank Richards knew Yen Chin too well to trust him very far. The little heathen was truly Oriental in his manners and customs, and much given to "ways that are dark, and tricks that are vain."

"Well?" said Frank, stopping in his walk. Frank was busily engaged in thinking out the problem of his position and prospects at Cedar Creek, and did not welcome the interruption. But he had always been kind to the little Celestial, and his kindness did not fail now.

"Nicey ole Flanky back again," said Yen Chin. "Me velly glad see ole Flanky. Cly velly muchy when Flanky goey away."

"Gammon!" said Frank cheerily. "Pool lill' Chinee cly velly muchy," said Yen Chin reproachfully. "Likey nicey ole Flanky."

"Have you been playing fan-tan while I've been away?" asked Frank. He had not forgotten Yen Chin's little ways, and he could guess that the heathen was "handing out" smooth words now as a preparation for asking for a little loan. The Chinese's predilection for gambling had often landed him in serious trouble.

Yen Chin shook his head. "No playee fan-tan," he said. "Chinee good boy; velly good little chap. Plomise Flanky no play, and keepee plomise."

"I hope so," said Frank, very doubtfully however.

"Flanky bling home dollee from diggings?" asked Yen Chin.

"Yes, I had some luck."

"How muchee?"

"Three hundred."

"Flanky nicey ole fellee," said Yen Chin. "Flanky solly to see pool lill Yen Chin's fathee soldee up."

"Eh? Is John Chin's laundry going to be sold up?" exclaimed Frank.

Yen Chin nodded mournfully.

"Pool ole John Chin linned," he said. "Sellee up pool ole John Chin if no payee fifttee dollee to-day."

Frank looked at him doubtfully.

He knew Yen Chin's yarns of old, and he did not, as a matter of fact, believe a single word of the heathen's statement. It was far more probable that Yen Chin had been playing fan-tan again at the Chinese "joint" in Thompson town, and had lost all his money, and was seeking to "stick" Frank Richards for a fresh supply of cash.

"Flanky believe pool ole Yen Chin?" said the Chinese. "You goey to Thompson, you see bill of sale stuck up on John Chin's laundry. Velly hard lines on pool ole man. Suppose you lendee me fifttee dollee"

"Same old game—what?" broke in Bob Lawless' voice. "You young rascal!" Bob caught the little Chinese by his pigtail and jerked it, and there was a loud howl from Yen Chin. "Pulling Frank's leg again—eh?"

"Yow-ow-ow! Lettee goey!" wailed Yen Chin.

"Is there anything in his yarn, Bob?" asked Frank.

Bob Lawless chuckled.

"If there was I wouldn't let you shell out fifty dollars for him, I guess," he answered. "But there isn't. John Chin is doing a flourishing business, and his laundry isn't any more likely to be sold up than the Lawless Ranch."

"My hat! You awful young rogue!" exclaimed Frank indignantly.

Yen Chin jerked away his pigtail and backed off grinning.

"Yah! Pullee sillee ole Flanky's leg! he jeered." "Flanky velly softee ole ass! Yah!"

And with that grateful remark Yen Chin scuttled away before Frank Richards' boot could reach him.

Bob laughed as he caught the expression on Frank's face.

"I guess you'd better shove your dollars in the bank, old scout," he said. "Somebody will have them off you before you're much older if you don't."

Frank coloured, and then laughed.

"Ass!" he replied. "Of—of course, if old John Chin really was being sold up."

"No business of yours if he was!" grunted Bob. "You'll never be a rich man, Frank, if you make everybody's troubles your own, as you usually do."

"Well, I don't know that I specially want to be rich," said Frank, with a smile. "I know you think I'm too easy-going, Bob. But after all, I have a lot of luck that other fellows don't have. I've seen Mr. Isaacs, and he wants me to take up my stories for the 'Thompson Press' again. That's going to be ten dollars a week for me."

"Lot of good for you if you give it away as fast as you get it!" grunted Bob. "I reckon I'd better get Mr. Isaacs to pay it to me, and mind it

for you till you grow to years of discretion, if ever you do."

"Bow-wow!" said Frank cheerily. "But about Yen Chin—"

"Oh, bother Yen Chin!" said Bob. "I've been thinking—"

"Time you began," agreed Bob. "And what have you been thinking about?"

"I suppose that young rascal has been gambling again, and that's why he was trying to stick me for the dollars."

"Sure! He's been seen a dozen times sneaking in and out of the Chinese joint at the back of Main Street, where they play fan-tan."

Frank Richards wrinkled his brows thoughtfully.

"He had been at that game before I went away," he said.

"He's generally at it, more or less," said Bob. "You'll never cure a Chinese of gambling. They've got it bred in the bone."

"He was hard up then, and trying to stick us for money," said Frank.

"I know."

"He is a thundering young rascal," said Frank musingly. "He hasn't got a white man's ideas of right and wrong; and when he wants money for gambling he's capable of pretty nearly anything, I think."

"What are you driving at?" asked Bob, with a curious look at his chum.

"There's somebody at Cedar Creek who steals," said Frank quietly.

"There was somebody robbed Miss Meadows before I went away. The fellow's never been found."

"Pshaw!"

"I've gone all over the chaps in my mind," continued Frank. "I can't think of any white man here who'd steal. Hacke is rather a bully, but he's not a thief. Bunker Honk is a bit of a rogue, but not to that extent. I can't think of any fellow who'd touch money not his own, excepting"

"Yen Chin!" breathed Bob.

"And we know he'd lost his money, gambling, at that time," said Frank.

"He's been gambling since, and there have been two more thefts. Now he's been at fan-tan again, and he's trying to swindle me out of fifty dollars. Bob, old chap, doesn't it look—"

"Jerusalem! Kick me!" said Bob Lawless. "Kick me hard! Why didn't I see it all before?"

"You think—"

"I don't think—I know! Cherub, old man, kick me!" said Bob, as Vere Beauclerc came up.

"Certainly! But what for?" asked Beauclerc, laughing.

Frank Richards explained, and Beauclerc looked very grave.

"Looks like it," he agreed. "We ought to have thought of Yen Chin. But—but if it's so, Frank, how are we going to prove it? He won't own up. I hardly think that young rascal could tell the truth if he tried!"

"And he's never been known to try!" said Bob.

Frank Richards nodded.

"But he's hard up again," he said. "He wants money to play fan-tan; and, if what I think is correct, he doesn't care where or how he gets it. That means that it's time for another theft to take place."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bob.

Beauclerc whistled.

"And if another theft takes place," said Frank Richards grimly, "the thief is going to be discovered this time—the right man, too! It seems to me, you fellows, that I can see light at last!"

The 4th Chapter. Catching a Rascal!

"Leaving it in your desk, Frank?"

"Isn't it safe there?"

"Oh, all right!"

The almond eyes of Yen Chin, the Chinese, glittered for a moment, but he did not turn his head towards the chums of Cedar Creek."

Afternoon lessons were over, and the school had cleared off, but Frank Richards & Co. lingered to chat in the big school-room in a group near the pinewood desks.

Yen Chin was hanging about the doorway. Although he did not look at the chums, they knew very well that the heathen was listening. In fact, he was evidently waiting in the doorway for Frank Richards, to make another attempt to screw something out of him in the way of cash.

Fan-tan at the "joint" behind Main Street had cleared out the luckless Celestial, and he was in a desperate mood. There was no limit to the trickery he would have been guilty of to raise the wherewithal for another visit to the fan-tan joint to try his luck again.

Frank Richards & Co. did not look at him; they seemed unconscious of his presence.

But they knew that the young rascal was listening to every word.

Frank placed a couple of bills in

his desk—bills for one hundred dollars each.

He slammed down the lid carelessly. "Going to lock it?" asked Beauclerc.

"I've not got a key."

"Well, come on, then!"

The Co. walked out of the school-room, passing Yen Chin without looking at him.

The Chinese followed them into the play-ground. He caught Frank Richards by the sleeve.

"Nicey ole Flanky—"

Frank shook off his hand.

"Let me alone, you young rascal!" he snapped.

"You lendee me fifttee dollee—"

"Not a red cent!"

"Pool ole John Chin sellee up—"

Frank Richards made a motion with his boot.

"Clear," he said, "or—"

Yen Chin scuttled away.

The chums walked away towards Mr. Slimmey's cabin. They were going to split logs for Mr. Slimmey before riding home—as they did sometimes. On the present occasion, however, they had another reason for remaining at Cedar Creek after school hours, and splitting logs was rather a "blind" than anything else.

Yen Chin followed them at a distance, and watched them for some minutes while they were at work on the logs.

Then he walked away to the school-house.

Bob Lawless watched him out of sight, and then glanced at his chums.

"I guess he's biting!" he remarked.

"I fancy so," said Frank. "Anyhow, what's he hanging round the school for now, instead of going home?"

"Plain enough!" said Beauclerc. "He knows that the bank-bills are in the desk, and he means—"

"Sure!" said Bob.

The rancher's son left the wood-pile, and crept along the cabin, which shut off Yen Chin from view. He



peered cautiously round the building, and caught sight of the Chinese again, just entering the lumber schoolhouse. In the school-room the heathen lad had no business whatever at that hour.

Bob hurriedly rejoined his chums.

"He's gone in!" he said.

"That settles it!" said Frank, throwing down his mallet. "Let's get going."

"You bet!"

The three chums scudded across the playground towards the lumber schoolhouse, taking care, however, to keep out of sight of the windows.

They entered the house quietly.

In a few moments Frank was tapping at the door of Miss Meadows' sitting-room.

"Come in!"

Frank entered the sitting-room, and Miss Meadows, who was engaged in household accounts, and deep in figures, glanced at him in some surprise.

"You are not gone home yet, Richards?"

"No, Miss Meadows," said Frank. "I—I want you to come with me, please?"

"What?"

"I think we have found out the thief of Cedar Creek, ma'am!" said Frank hurriedly.

Miss Meadows started to her feet.

"Richards!"

"I've put two hundred-dollar bills in my desk in the school-room, ma'am," said Frank. "Both of them have been signed on the back by my uncle, Mr. Lawless, so there can be no mistake about identifying them."

"And you think—"

"The fellow we suspect has just gone into the school-room," said Bob Lawless.

"Bless my soul!"

"He's going through my desk now," said Frank. "I had a peep at him as I came by the school-room door. You can see him for yourself, Miss Meadows, if you look."

The Canadian schoolmistress hesitated.

"Really, Richards—"

"Come!" exclaimed Frank. "Miss

Meadows, it's due to me that you should find out the thief, if possible. He's at work now in the school-room, and if you stop him as he comes out he will have the notes about him. If I am mistaken, you can punish me as much as you like. But you're bound to put it to the test."

Miss Meadows nodded.

"Very good!" she said.

"Quick!" breathed Bob.

The schoolmistress followed the boys into the passage. They stopped by the door of the school-room, and only in time, for a minute, or less, later it opened softly, and Yen Chin came out.

With all his coolness and nerve, the little heathen was taken aback at the sight of Frank Richards & Co. and Miss Meadows in the passage, and he gave a violent start.

But he recovered himself in a moment.

"You comee home now, Flanky?" he said. "Me waitee for you."

"What have you been doing in the school-room, Yen Chin?" asked Miss Meadows sternly.

"Me waitee for ole Flanky!"

"Have you been to Richards' desk?"

Again the heathen started.

"No, Miss Meadows!"

"Very good. Remain where you are, Yen Chin. Richards, go to your desk and ascertain whether the bills are still there."

"Yes, Miss Meadows."

Yen Chin breathed hard. He made a motion as if to scuttle down the passage, but Bob Lawless took hold of his pigtail.

"No, you don't!" said the rancher's son grimly.

"Step into the school-room again, Yen Chin, and remain there!" said Miss Meadows sternly. "Beauclerc, kindly fetch Mr. Slimmey here."

"Certainly, ma'am!"

Beauclerc hurried away, and Yen Chin cast an apprehensive look round him. He began to realise that he was in the toils—that his own rascality had been turned against him for once.

Frank Richards looked up from his desk.

"Well, Richards?" called out Miss Meadows.

"The notes are gone, ma'am!"

"Me no takee!" gasped Yen Chin, in great alarm. "Me no goey neel ole desk. Yen Chin velly good boy!"

"We shall see," said Miss Meadows quietly. "Ah, here is Mr. Slimmey! Yen Chin, keep your hands out of your pockets—see that he does, Lawless! Mr. Slimmey, will you oblige me by searching this boy, who is suspected of having taken two hundred-dollar bills from Richards' desk?"

"No takee!" yelled Yen Chin.

He made a dart to escape; but Bob Lawless had an iron grip on his pigtail. Yen Chin was brought to a sudden halt. And with the rancher's son still gripping his queue, the hapless rascal of Cedar Creek stood wriggling and squirming while Mr. Slimmey went thoroughly and scientifically through his pockets.

The 5th Chapter. A Righted Wrong!

"There's one!"

Bob Lawless uttered that exclamation as Mr. Slimmey drew a hundred-dollar bill from Yen Chin's loose garments, and held it up.

Miss Meadows glanced at it.

It was endorsed on the back by Mr. Lawless, and there was no mistaking the rancher's signature.

"Where did you obtain this bill, Yen Chin?"

Yen Chin groaned dismally.

"You utterly unscrupulous boy!" exclaimed Miss Meadows, greatly shocked. "You have stolen this from Richards' desk. Where is the other? You have taken two."

"No takee."

"I am sorry to trouble you, Mr. Slimmey, but will you—"

"Certainly!"

Mr. Slimmey searched the Chinese again, more thoroughly than before. But the second hundred-dollar bill did not come to light.

"You are sure that two are missing, Richards?" asked Miss Meadows.

"Quite sure, ma'am."

"He appears to have taken only one, however."

Bob Lawless gave a sudden yell.

"Look in the other desks, ma'am! You remember when two notes were taken before, one was found in Frank's pocket. That little villain only kept one of them. Perhaps he's played the same trick again."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"By gum!" muttered Frank. "The awful young rascal! He may have stuck the other note in another fellow's desk, to be found there, if there was a search."

"I will search all the desks very carefully," said Mr. Slimmey.

"Yen Chin velly good boy," mumbled the little Celestial. "Me tellee Missy Meddee whole tloof."

"If you wish to confess, Yen Chin, I will be as lenient as possible with you, as I am aware that you do not understand these matters like a Christian," said Miss Meadows.

"Where is the other note?"

"In Chelub's desk!" murmured Yen Chin.

"In my desk!" shouted Beauclerc. "Me tellee whole tloof."

"You—you—you were going to try to put it on me this time, same as you did on Frank the first time!" gasped Beauclerc.

"Yen Chin solly!" murmured the heathen. "Awful lill' lascal, me know. Velly muchee solly. Nevee do so no more. Plomise."

Mr. Slimmey examined Beauclerc's desk, and, after a little search, found the missing note hidden among the papers therein.

The horror and indignation in the faces about him did not seem to affect Yen Chin very much. He took the peculiar Oriental view of such matters, and his repentance, such as it was, was founded entirely upon the painful prospect of punishment.

"I scarcely know how to deal with this wretched boy," said Miss Meadows, after a pause. "Yen Chin, you have robbed one of your school-fellows, and laid a cunning scheme to throw suspicion upon another."

"Pool lill Chinee velly solly!"

"I can no longer doubt that you are guilty of all the thefts that have taken place in the school."

"Yen Chin velly bad boy!" murmured the heathen.

"You were guilty of the first theft, in taking a hundred and ten dollars from my room, and you placed the ten-dollar note in Richards' pocket!" Miss Meadows exclaimed.

"Me velly solly!"

"Do you realise the harm you have done, you utterly wicked boy?" exclaimed the distressed schoolmistress. "You caused Richards to leave the school in disgrace—Richards, who has always been kind to you!"

"Me velly bad ole lascal," said Yen Chin. "Me likee ole Flanky velly muchy. If Flanky lendee money, Yen Chin no takee. No lendee, takee. What you tinkee? Me velly solly, and nevee playee fan-tan no mole."

"The wretched boy has been gambling, it seems," said Mr. Slimmey.

Miss Meadows drew a deep breath.

"You may go home now, Yen Chin," she said, at last. "I shall see your father to-morrow, and consult with him what is to be done."

Yen Chin gave a dismal howl.

"No tellee John Chin! John Chin skinee me!"

"You should have thought of that earlier," said Miss Meadows. "You may go now."

The hapless heathen sneaked away with a woebegone look. Miss Meadows turned to Frank Richards.

"Richards, I am greatly shocked at this discovery, but I am more glad than I can say that the truth has been brought to light. By to-morrow all Cedar Creek will know that you have been completely cleared, and I am sorry, my dear boy, that I ever doubted you!"

"And I can only say the same," said Mr. Slimmey heartily, shaking hands with Frank Richards.

"Hurray!" yelled Bob Lawless.

"Thank you, Miss Meadows! Thank you, Mr. Slimmey!" gasped Frank, with a catch in his voice. "I—I'm awfully glad!"

"The truth will be known to everyone to-morrow," said Miss Meadows. "I will give you a note to take to your uncle, Richards. I am thankful that justice has been done at last."

In a merry mood, Frank Richards & Co. mounted their horses to ride home in the summer dusk. On the trail, near the gates of Cedar Creek, they found Yen Chin lingering, and he called to them.

"Pool ole John Chin sellee up, if not pay fifttee dollee."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Frank Richards.

"You lendee?" asked Yen Chin hopefully.

"I'll lend you my riding-whip!" exclaimed Frank wrathfully.

And he did, with vigour, and the hapless heathen fled, yelling dismally.

Frank Richards & Co. rode on to the ranch, where the news they brought was received with great delight and satisfaction. And the next morning, when the chums of Cedar Creek arrived at the backwoods school, there was a great reception for the suspected schoolboy who had been righted at last!

THE END.

THE FINEST TALE OF ADVENTURE ON LAND AND SEA EVER WRITTEN!

**The Peril of the Swamps!**

The Bombay Castle, with Dick Dorrington & Co., Dr. Crabhunter, Scorer Wilkinson, and other masters and boys, put in at various Eastern ports. After many exciting adventures, they steam out of Tangier, having broken up a powerful gang of crooks who are out to "get" Captain Handyman and his son.

Dick Dorrington & Co., better known as the "Glory Hole Gang," with M. de Jolibois, the French professor, and Mr. Lal Tata, the maths master, joined up with a Captain Lee, and set off on a treasure hunt in the Everglades, off the coast of Florida. A scoundrel known as Louis the Shark is out to stop them.

Captain Lee led the flotilla of eight canoes across the Big Water Lake. By harpooning a giant pickerel, paddling was rendered unnecessary. The great fish towed the line of canoes across the lake at high speed. Before they got to the opposite side, however, a great storm gathered, and a volley of thunder roared over the water.

In the opposite direction, the water on the horizon darkened to a deep black.

"Here comes the wind!" said Captain Lee. "Flying straight into the storm! That means we'll get it over us. But we are going along very nicely, and the thunder in the air is freshening up the old fish. There's nothing like a thunderstorm for making a pickerel travel!"

"My auntie!" shouted Monsieur de Jolibois, pointing up to the lurid sky. "Is it the end of ze world zat approach? What do we do when zis so great storm overtake us?"

"Wait till I wave my paddle three times," shouted Captain Lee; "then slip the towlines, and follow me! But we'll take the last ounce out of the old fish first!"

The canoes flew on. But that ominous dark line came sweeping over the lake with a low, hissing sound, and a hot puff of wind swept across the canoes in a sharp gust, slackening the water into a swirl of ripples, which slapped angrily at the sides of the flying craft.

The gust passed over. But soon another heavier squall came sweeping over the water, turning it over in little short waves which made the canoes lurch and roll in an uneasy manner.

And the thunderstorm, rolling up against this wind which was flying dead into the eye of it, increased in intensity.

The lightnings were almost blinding. Then a vast veil of rain came roaring over the roughened waters, knocking down the little lumpy waves by its sheer weight.

And the old fish kept on the string of canoes swinging behind him like a line of trucks behind a light engine. But wind and sea were increasing. Captain Lee, his mouth set and his eyes watchful, had whipped out his great knife ready to cut the line.

The water grew rougher and rougher, piling up into steep, white-capped waves, which kept the boys busy baling as they slapped viciously over the bows of the canoes. Then came a shout from Captain Lee.

An isolated bunch of reeds, bending under the blast, came sliding up out of the murk of the rain.

"Hurrah!" he cried. "We are across! In ten minutes we'll be in the Bayou!"

Mr. Lal Tata grunted as a gallon of

water, thrown by a spiteful wavetop, hit him in the chest!

"In ten minutes' time I think we shall be in Jerichos!" said he. "I pray you, captain, cut away that fish. He now becomes dangerous. He pulls the canoe down into the sea!"

Jim Handyman laughed. He was busy baling with a dipper.

"We'll get in all right, sir," said he. "Don't you worry!"

"Ah, Master Jim!" gasped Mr. Lal Tata. "You think this terrible display of elements all jolly jokes. You are a fool, boy! Do you not see that we are in perilous situations? Do you not see that frail barques cannot withstand so great seas, more especially when torn along by great fish?"

Another patch of reeds seemed to rise from the water and race towards them as the fish raced on.

It was touch and go for the string of canoes now, for a blast of wind whipped the shallow waters to absolute fury.

"Jiminy!" said Jim, looking round him as he baled. "It's like being afloat on gingerbeer!"

"Ha! We shall soon be at the bottom of the glass like a drowned bluebottle!" said Mr. Lal Tata, his teeth chattering.

But the tufts of reed that were rising up from the shallow water all round them were beginning to break the run of the steep waves, and suddenly Captain Lee slashed through the towing-line and allowed their tug to run off. At the same moment he lifted his paddle as a sign to the canoes to cast off.

On they went, the little craft tossing like corks on the rough water. But now they were free of their tow they rode easier.

The lightnings flickered through the dusk as they followed the leading canoe, and soon they paddled into the shelter of huge walls of high reed where the water lay smooth and deep, and where the wind roared over the tops of the reeds without stirring the water under their lee.

Captain Lee eased up paddling as, in the gathering dusk, they found this shelter.

"You can shake hands with yourself, Master Jim," said he. "If that blow had caught us well out in the big water, there would have been no more seekers for the Spaniard's treasure for a while. But now we are well on the way. Still, there's many a slip between the cup and the lip yet."

The words were hardly out of Captain Lee's mouth when there was a flash from the reed wall close by which they were passing, and his hat flew into the air, circling round ere it fell into the water.

Like lightning the captain fired in answer, and in the reeds there was a heavy fall, followed by a grim bubbling and rasping as a canoe overturned.

"I was waiting for that," said Captain Lee calmly.

"Waiting to be shot?" asked Jim Handyman, in wonderment.

"No; waiting to shoot the other chap," replied Captain Lee calmly. "That was Snake Jack, one of Louis the Shark's lieutenants. He's the only one in this part of the swamps. Louis the Shark has got every line well covered."

He turned the canoe, and recovered his hat, in the twilight.

The thunderstorm was passing away now, and the squall it had brought up had dropped as swiftly as it had arisen. The canoes had bunched at the shot.

"Keep apart, young gentlemen,"

said Captain Lee coolly. "Keep daylight between those canoes, or we may suffer when we come up against Louis the Shark and his band. There's only one of them here now, and he is finished. There's no one to tell that we have passed by here."

He backed the canoe out into the waterway.

"Now, Master Jim, and you, Mr. Lal Tata, I will put you in the other canoe whilst Sleepy and I go in and get that dead varmint out. There's just a chance that there may be another of the rattlers hidin' in the reeds there—just a tiny chance—and I'd sooner take it than any of you."

The transhipment was made, and Captain Lee and Jim paddled into the reeds.

Soon the reeds rustled, and the black shape of a canoe was thrust forward.

"It was Snake Jack!" said Captain Lee grimly. "And we've saved the sheriff a job. He was wanted for a dozen murders, and that is what drove him into the Everglades and the pay

Skeleton was dying for his supper.

Mr. Lal Tata was grumbling that this was the most "foolish" expedition of the many foolsome expeditions he had embarked on in company with the boys of the Bombay Castle. He talked to Monsieur de Jolibois, who paddled in a canoe alongside him. He told him of terrible rides on elephants, and of night adventures in the jungle, of escapades with native rajahs, and many hairbreadth adventures. But of all the expeditions he had even been on, Mr. Lal Tata said, this was the most perilous.

They were, he said, entering into a labyrinth of swamps out of which they could never find their way. They were surrounded on all sides by enemies, and it was very uncomfortable sitting in a canoe little larger than a portmanteau.

"This," said Mr. Lal Tata, "is the sort of place for Gus, that absurd crocodile which the boys carry round the world in cricket-bags. It is not the place for human beings, and— Look!"

He pointed into the mists. There showed a light—the light of a storm-lantern swinging in the hands of some unseen runner. The lamp could be plainly seen swinging up and down. The man who was carrying it was running.

But where in all this vast swamp was a place where a man could run? There was no dry ground within miles, and the man was running through the reeds without a rustle.

Sleepy had seen the light.

"Law, sakes!" he cried, his wool standing up on end.

Another light showed dancing across the swamp, and a third.



A TERRIBLE MOMENT! There was suddenly a loud cracking and rending sound, and the very earth caved in under the boys' feet. "Stand back—a volcano!" yelled Captain Lee. But the warning was too late, and the whole party disappeared into the earth.

of Louis the Shark. Now for the weights, Sleepy!"

The canoe was lashed round and round, and three heavy weights of lead that were used as moorings were placed in her. Then with a cut of his axe Captain Lee scuttled her, and she slowly sank in the deep water of the Bayou, leaving only a widening ripple behind her.

"Dead men tell no tales!" said Captain Lee grimly. "And that varmint we sunk there was a three-volume novel of rascality. Now we will paddle on. There's no look-out for us for another twenty miles. I'll hoist a lantern to my jackstaff so that you won't lose me."

He lit a little lamp, and hoisted it up to the little flagpole in his canoe.

The boys were wearied with paddling, and they heartily wished their camping-ground was in sight as they paddled on through the darkness. A mist had gathered after the storm, and it seemed as if every insect that could sting was flying through the thick air of the swamps and stinging at them.

The Bayou narrowed to one of the reed-bordered lanes of water through which they had been paddling most of the day. This lane seemed to branch at every few hundred yards, but Captain Lee held on steadily, signalling now and then to know that all the canoes were following close behind them.

The boys paddled on grimly.

Skeleton was dying for his supper.

Mr. Lal Tata was grumbling that this was the most "foolish" expedition of the many foolsome expeditions he had embarked on in company with the boys of the Bombay Castle. He talked to Monsieur de Jolibois, who paddled in a canoe alongside him. He told him of terrible rides on elephants, and of night adventures in the jungle, of escapades with native rajahs, and many hairbreadth adventures. But of all the expeditions he had even been on, Mr. Lal Tata said, this was the most perilous.

They were, he said, entering into a labyrinth of swamps out of which they could never find their way. They were surrounded on all sides by enemies, and it was very uncomfortable sitting in a canoe little larger than a portmanteau.

"This," said Mr. Lal Tata, "is the sort of place for Gus, that absurd crocodile which the boys carry round the world in cricket-bags. It is not the place for human beings, and— Look!"

He pointed into the mists. There showed a light—the light of a storm-lantern swinging in the hands of some unseen runner. The lamp could be plainly seen swinging up and down. The man who was carrying it was running.

But where in all this vast swamp was a place where a man could run? There was no dry ground within miles, and the man was running through the reeds without a rustle.

Sleepy had seen the light.

"Law, sakes!" he cried, his wool standing up on end.

Another light showed dancing across the swamp, and a third.

in dese swamps, Mas'r Jim," he added, "an' a mighty lot ob dem get knocked on de head and drowned."

"What are you shooting at?" called Captain Lee from his canoe.

"Some robbers sar," replied Mr. Lal Tata. "Monsieur de Jolibois discharged great volleys at them, and put three lights out."

"Robbers your grandmother! Those were Jack o' Lanterns, Will-o'-the-wisp, Hover lanterns, marsh gas stirred up by the thunderstorm," answered Captain Lee. "You might as well try to shoot a puff of steam!"

Monsieur de Jolibois was rather crestfallen now that the alarm was over. But Sleepy was sure they were the Whistlers, and tied several little bits of rag in his wool which is the rigger's way of keeping off witches and warlocks.

"Doan't yo' believe what Capten Lee say, Mar'sr Jim," he whispered. "Dey Whistlers are de real bad men, and dey takes on all sorts o' shapes in dis Everglade. Dis am a mighty bad place an' full ob evil sperrits!"

The mist cleared, falling swiftly in heavy drops, and the stars shone out in the dark blue vault of the sky.

Captain Lee paddled on, steering by the stars as much as his lighted compass, and the little flotilla of canoes tracked through endless lanes between the dark whispering reeds across small lakes and past several gloomy-looking islands, which only rose a few feet above the swamp.

All these islands were much alike—a cluster of gloomy cypress or swamp cedar, festooned with the funereal Spanish moss, with its long hanging beads.

"Bless ma soul!" gasped Sleepy now very much wide awake. "It am de Three Whistlers!"

And even the boys felt their backs turn cold, as though they had suddenly broken out in a cold perspiration, as they saw the three mysterious lanterns joggling through the reeds suddenly turn in their direction.

Then Monsieur de Jolibois, thoroughly excited, snatched up a rifle.

"Ha!" he cried. "These ruffians—they attack us again!"

And his rifle cracked through the mist.

As Monsieur de Jolibois' rifle cracked, every one of the mysterious lights that were dodging through the reeds of the swamp disappeared.

But soon they were seen dancing away in the distance.

"Ha! Dey run away!" exclaimed Monsieur de Jolibois. "Dey know dat Jolibois of Verdun is here!"

Crack, crack, crack!

He emptied the magazine of his rifle at the retiring lights, but with out putting them out.

"It hain't no good yo, firin' at dem lights, sar," said Sleepy, his teeth chattering. "Dem are corpse lights for shuah! Dem are de Whistlers."

"Who are the Whistlers?" asked Jim.

"Dey be de souls of bad men who hain't been drowned in de swamps," said Sleepy. "Mighty lot o' bad men

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"Dey be de souls of bad men who hain't been drowned in de swamps," said Sleepy. "Mighty lot o' bad men

The boys were pretty well beaten with canoe paddling now.

Skeleton muttered that he didn't care if he never saw another canoe again as long as he lived.

"Just to think of it!" he said to Arty. "I've spent pounds and pounds of good money to pay for rowing in boats. A shilling an hour, and sixpence the next. I must have been off my head! And, oh, I am so hungry!"

Captain Lee heard the remark.

"Only another five miles, Mr. Skeleton!" said he. "Only another five miles, then we get to our destination."

But Skeleton was famishing. By an oversight he had come out without his nosebag, the haversack of provisions from which he kept on browsing like a donkey on a common. And the food in his canoe was all packed up under a close cover of tarpaulin.

He groaned, and could paddle no more. But Cecil took his place, and showed that he could use a paddle better than any canoeist in the fleet.

His huge arms and tremendous chest were the ideal development for a paddler, and the canoe in which he was seated shot ahead of the flotilla at once, so that Captain Lee had to call it back lest it should get lost in the labyrinth of the swamps.

"There's one of you that's got

(Continued overleaf.)

THE ADVENTURES OF JIM HANDYMAN.

(Continued from previous page.)

plenty of sand in him," said he. "Come back and follow the lantern, or I'll have to search all over the Everglades to find ye."

"It's the monkey, sir," replied Skeleton faintly. "Pity we did not know that he could shift a canoe like that before, or he could have towed the whole lot of us!" said Captain Lee.

"Now, old monk," said Captain Lee, "show us what there is in those arms and paws of yours!" Cecil showed his white teeth and bent to his paddle, towing the whole load of canoes with the greatest ease.

"Gee whizz!" said he. "We'll make another fifteen miles at this speed, and that will land us right where I want to get. You are a lanky, Cecil, my boy, and I'm proud to know you!"

Cecil knew that he was being praised, and increased his efforts. The flotilla simply tore along, propelled by this one vast animal engine.

Skeleton had found an unexpected slab of chocolate in his pocket, and Arty gave him a couple of ship's biscuits, which had tumbled out on the floor of the canoe when they were stowing her.

"This is fine," said he. "If we had only thought of it before, Cecil might have paddled us all the way!" Captain Lee nodded.

"That's a splendid animal you have got there!" said he. "He's as good as twenty niggers! I should call him a twenty-nigger power orang-outang. Is he fully grown?"

"Not yet," replied Skeleton. "He's grown no end since we first had him, and he grows out of all his clothes a few months after he has got them."

"I should have been afraid of keeping an animal like that," said Captain Lee. "and I'm not afraid of much!" "Old Cecil's all right, sir!" said Skeleton.

"Do you mean to say he'd never hurt anyone?" asked Captain Lee. "Not unless he thinks they are going to hurt us, sir," replied Skeleton.

"The canoes were fairly racing now under the huge sweep of Cecil's paddle. They were crossing a lake covered with huge lily-pads, and starred with huge pink water-lilies.

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their sides, whilst the great, starry blossoms drew down under the water. And so Cecil kept on, his untiring arms and huge shoulders steadily working like an engine.

"Now, boys," said Captain Lee, "these are what are called the Hundred Islands of the Everglades, and once upon a time there was deep water right up to this place; and it's on one of these islands that the old galleon is stowed."

"One island is near as good as another to-night. To-morrow we'll have to get around exploring to see if we can find the shape of a ship hidden away in any one of them.

"See here, boys!" said he. "I've a notion that this old monk of yours, by all you tell me, is a mascot. He brings the luck. We'll let him land where he likes."

He ceased to steer, but Cecil kept on paddling at full speed. "Gee whizz!" exclaimed Captain Lee. "If you left that monk alone he'd travel all night, and wouldn't stop for breakfast."

"That's all right, old monk!" said Captain Lee assuringly. "You've done the same as Columbus. You've hit the continent of America. Now, where are my wooden pins? I'll strap them on, and we'll haul out the canoes and make camp."

Cecil stopped paddling, and looked round him in wonderment. "That's all right, old monk!" said Captain Lee assuringly.

He strapped on his wooden legs, and the boys, leaping over into the shallow warm water, landed on a wide beach of sand, hauling up the canoes in a regular row.

"Do you mean to say he'd never hurt anyone?" asked Captain Lee. "Not unless he thinks they are going to hurt us, sir," replied Skeleton.

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"This is where I get one on you, boys!" said he. "I can't get wet feet."

Then he looked around him with approval. They had landed on a long, sandy island crowned with tall cedars, which showed dark against the stars, and free of the depressing Spanish moss.

"That's the first luck!" said Captain Lee, clapping Cecil on the shoulder. "Where there's no Spanish moss there's no snakes, and where there's sand there's no snake."

The canoes were hastily unpacked, and Cecil, armed with an axe, was sent to get firewood. Soon tremendous smashes from the little wood showed that Cecil was at work making the chips fly.

He had got on to a fallen cedar, full of resin, and was slashing off branch after branch. And before Sleepy was ready with his camping pots and kettles, Cecil made his appearance in the small open space on the ridge of the island.

"Put 'em dar, Mr. Cecil!" said Sleepy politely. "Dat is whar we will make our camp-fiah, sar!" And Cecil dumped his load, and went back to get more.

Then Sleepy got busy with his camp-fire, ranging the branches seminoles fashion, like a great cartwheel. Cecil followed up with a huge armful of massive logs, and the fire was started, a huge, ruddy blaze lighting the trees all round.

"We can have a good fire to-night, boys!" said Captain Lee. "We are miles and miles ahead of Louis the Shark, and there's none of his people in this country yet."

"Be'old!" exclaimed Monsieur de Jolibois. "I am broken, my dear Tata. I am broken with fatigue. Never have I performed such feats of endurance!"

"I also am suffering great pains of weariness!" said Mr. Lal Tata. "Always when I come out with these boys of mine I get led into foolsome adventures which are a great weariness to me."

It was worth money to see Cecil pouring out the coffee into mugs, rich, steaming hot coffee that filled the air all round with its delightful aroma, and put new life into the tired boys.

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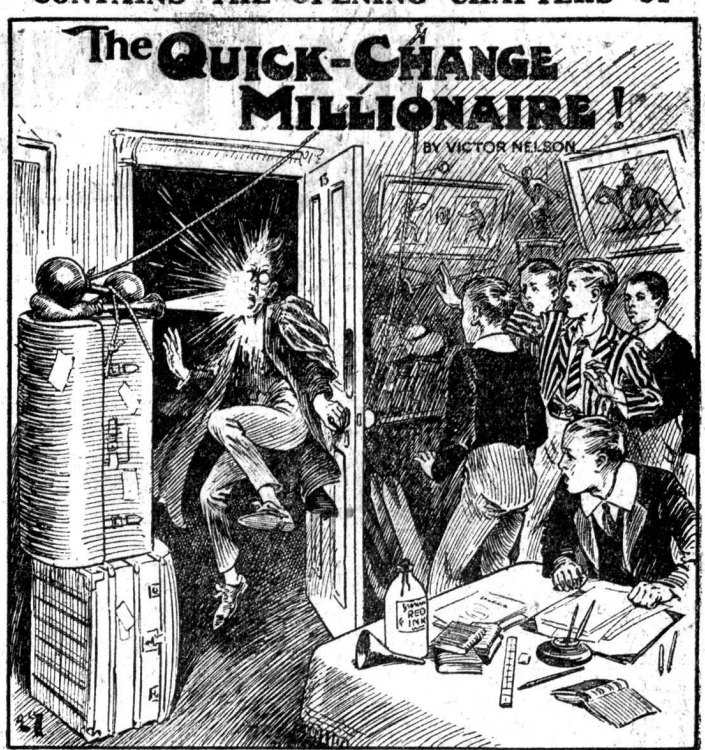
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for supper, and as the moon was just rising, Jim Handyman climbed up the tallest of the cedars to have a look round. The tree was as easy to climb as a bear's pole, for the branches, in dropping, left short stumps, which gave a hand hold and foothold.

But, arrived at the top, Jim could see nothing suspicious. Not a light showed over that vast expanse of swamp, dotted here and there with small islands and lakes and lagoons of all sizes, which showed in dim patches in the moonlight.

"It gives a fine view over the country," said he, "and the country is mostly under water." "Now, Chip," he urged, when Sleepy and Cecil had cleaned up and the oldsters had lighted their pipes, "give us a stave on the mouth-organ."

Chip, who was a great performer on the mouth-organ, started a merry tune, and, greatly to the delight of the boys, Cecil and Sleepy started dancing. A nigger can't keep his toes still when he hears music, especially if he hails from the Bermudas.

Fresh branches were thrown on the fire, and the nigger and Cecil danced a wild dance, greatly to the gratification of the company. It was a splendid dance—sort of nigger orang-outang war-dance.

The boys, wrapped in their blankets like a lot of Redskins, applauded the performance. The fire blazed up nobly, and the cold light of the rising moon made long, dark shadows amongst the trees.

"Now, boys," called Captain Lee, "you've all had a good time. I guess we'll sing 'Auld Lang Syne,' and then we will turn in. It's late now. You've had a heavy day of it to-day, and you'll have a heavier day of it to-morrow. Don't forget that Louis the Shark is due in this district by about noon, and you want to be fit and ready for him!"

So the boys joined hands round the fire, making a great ring, and, led on by Sleepy and Cecil, who were now thoroughly worked up, they danced round in a ring, singing "Auld Lang Syne," stamping and running at an increasing speed.

Then, all of a sudden, an astonishing and terrible thing happened. The huge fire, which was nearly burning itself down to embers, gave a sudden flare up, and, hurling up a huge shower of sparks, disappeared through the ground, leaving a great round hole, steaming and smoking like the crater of a volcano.

"Back, boys—back!" shouted Captain Lee, who, because of his wooden legs, had not joined in the dance, so that he was standing in the back-ground. But it was too late. There was a cracking and rending sound under their feet, and the surface of the earth where they were standing suddenly caved in, rolling them down the slope into the steaming mouth of the volcano.

"Oh crickey!" exclaimed Mr. Lal Tata, as he plunged forward. "We tumble into bowels of earth!" And Skeleton, falling on top of him, kicked him severely in the back of the neck. (More of this thrilling adventure story will appear in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND. Order your copy TO-DAY!)

It was a splendid dance—sort of nigger orang-outang war-dance. Cecil drummed on his chest with his huge fist, and gave forth a deep, booming sound like a war-drum.

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